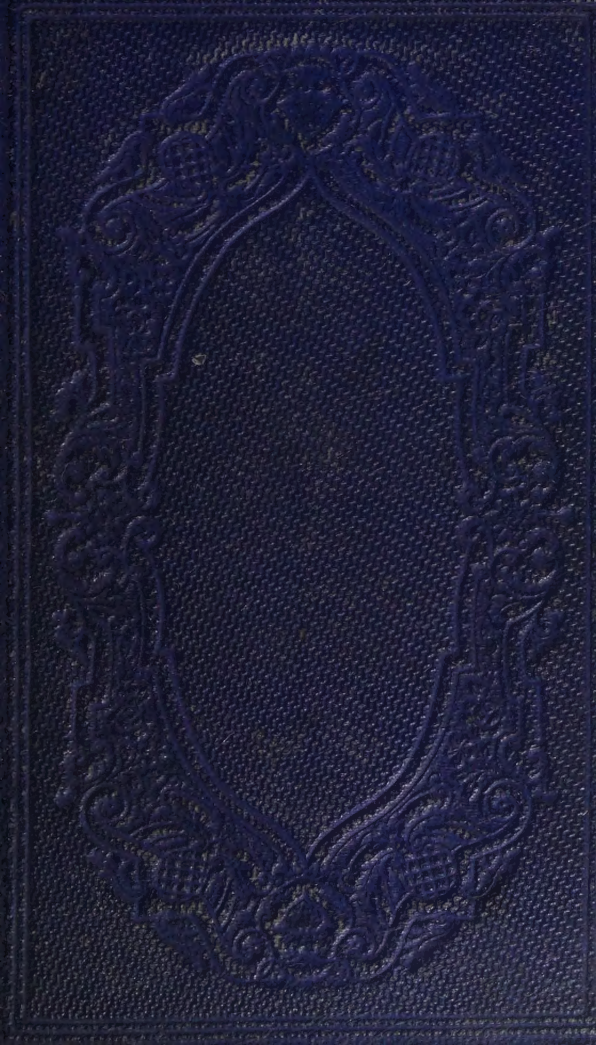

Emma & Annie Godfrey

from Chld.

May 13. 1860.

Phyllis E. Stone,

March, 1925.

ON RECEIVING A COPY OF TENNYSON'S POEMS.

When your new Tennyson I hold, dear friend,
Where blue and gold, like ſky and sunbeam, blend,—
A fairy tome—of not too large a grasp
For Queen Titania's dainty hand to clasp,—
I feel fresh truth in the old saying wise,
That greateſt worth in smalleſt parcel lies.
Will not the diamond, that fiery spark,
Buy a whole quarry full of granite ſtark?
Does not the flaunting hollyhock give place
To that pale flower, with downward—drooping face,
Which summer fashions of the moonbeams sheen
And sets in tents of pureſt emerald green?
Well suits your book with this sweet month of June,
When earth and ſky are in their perfect tune;
For when I read its golden words, I think
I hear the brown thrush and the bob-o-link;—
I hear the summer brook, the summer breeze,
I hear the whisper of the swaying trees;
Between the lines red roses seem to grow,
And lilies white around the margin blow;
Cloud-shadows swift across the meadows pass,
And fruit-trees drop their blossoms on the grass;
The wild bee hums upon the clover's cheek,
And the pert robin pipes with reſtless beak.

Thanks to the poet, who to duſty hearts
The balm and bloom of summer fields imparts;
Who gives the toil-worn mind a passage free
To the brown mountain and the sparkling sea;
Who lifts the thoughts from earth, and pours a ray
Of fairy land around life's common way.

And thanks to you, who put this precious wine,
Red from the poet's heart, in flaſk so fine,
The hand may clasp it, and the pocket hold;—
A caſket small, but filled with perfect gold.

June 6, 1856. G. S. H.

THE

POETICAL WORKS

OF

ALFRED TENNYSON,

POET LAUREATE, ETC.

COMPLETE IN ONE VOLUME.

BOSTON:
TICKNOR AND FIELDS.
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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Claribel	3
Lilian	4
Isabel	5
Mariana	6
To ——	8
Madeline	9
Song.—The Owl	11
Second Song.—To the Same	11
Recollections of the Arabian Nights	12
Ode to Memory	17
Song	20
Adeline	21
A Character	23
The Poet	24
The Poet's Mind	26
The Dying Swan	27
A Dirge	28
Love and Death	30
The Ballad of Oriana	31
Circumstance	34
The Merman	34
The Mermaid	35
Sonnet to J. M. K.	37
The Lady of Shalott	38
Mariana in the South	43
Eleanore	46
The Miller's Daughter	50
Fatima	57
Œnone	59
The Sisters	66
To ——	68
The Palace of Art	68
Lady Clara Vere De Vere	78
The May Queen	80

PAGE

New Year's Eve ... 83
Conclusion ... 86
The Lotos-Eaters ... 90
A Dream of Fair Women ... 96
Margaret ... 108
The Blackbird ... 110
The Death of the Old Year ... 111
To J. S ... 112
"You ask me why, though ill at ease" ... 115
"Of old sat freedom on the heights" ... 116
"Love thou thy land with love far brought" ... 117
The Goose ... 120
The Epic ... 123
Morte D'Arthur ... 124
The Gardener's Daughter ... 132
Dora ... 140
Audley Court ... 144
Walking to the Mail ... 147
St. Simeon Stylites ... 150
The Sea-Fairies ... 156
The Deserted House ... 157
Edwin Morris; or, the Lake ... 158
To ———, after reading a Life and Letters ... 163
To E. L., on his Travels in Greece ... 164
"Come not when I am dead" ... 165
The Eagle; a Fragment ... 165
The Talking Oak ... 166
Love and Duty ... 177
The Golden Year ... 180
Ulysses ... 182
Locksley Hall ... 184
Godiva ... 196
The Two Voices ... 199
The Day-Dream:—
Prologue ... 214
The Sleeping Palace ... 215
The Sleeping Beauty ... 217
The Arrival ... 217
The Revival ... 218
The Departure ... 219
Moral ... 220
L'Envoi ... 221
Epilogue ... 223
Amphion ... 223
St. Agnes' Eve ... 226
Sir Galahad ... 227
Edward Gray ... 230

PAGE
Will Waterproof's Lyrical Monologue..... 231
Lady Clare..... 238
The Lord of Burleigh..... 241
Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere..... 244
A Farewell..... 245
The Beggar Maid..... 246
The Vision of Sin..... 247
The Skipping Rope..... 253
"Move eastward, happy earth, and leave"..... 254
"Break, break, break"..... 254
The Poet's Song..... 255
The Princess..... 256
In Memoriam..... 351
Maud..... 451
The Brook: an Idyl..... 500
The Letters..... 507
Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington..... 508
The Daisy..... 516
To the Rev. F. D. Maurice..... 520
Will..... 521
The Charge of the Light Brigade..... 522

TO THE QUEEN.

Revered, beloved,—O you that hold
A nobler office upon earth
Than arms, or power of brain, or birth,
Could give the warrior kings of old,

Victoria,—since your Royal grace
To one of less desert allows
This laurel greener from the brows
Of him that uttered nothing base;

And should your greatness, and the care
That yokes with empire, yield you time
To make demand of modern rhyme,
If aught of ancient worth be there;

Then—while a sweeter music wakes,
And through wild March the throstle calls,
Where, all about your palace-walls,
The sunlit almond-blossom shakes—

Take, Madam, this poor book of song;
For, though the faults were thick as dust
In vacant chambers, I could trust
Your kindness. May you rule us long,

And leave us rulers of your blood
As noble till the latest day!
May children of our children say,
"She wrought her people lasting good;

"Her court was pure; her life serene;
God gave her peace; her land reposed;
A thousand claims to reverence closed
In her as Mother, Wife and Queen;

"And statesmen at her council met
Who knew the seasons, when to take
Occasion by the hand, and make
The bounds of freedom wider yet,

By shaping some august decree,
Which kept her throne unshaken still,
Broad-based upon her people's will,
And compassed by the inviolate sea."

MARCH, 1851.

POEMS.

CLARIBEL.

A MELODY.

Where Claribel low-lieth
The breezes pause and die,
Letting the rose-leaves fall:
But the solemn oak-tree sigheth,
Thick-leaved, ambrosial,
With an ancient melody
Of an inward agony,
Where Claribel low-lieth.

At eve the beetle boometh
Athwart the thicket lone:
At noon the wild bee hummeth
About the mossed headstone:
At midnight the moon cometh
And looketh down alone.
Her song the lintwhite swelleth,
The clear-voiced mavis dwelleth,
The callow throstle lispeth,
The slumbrous wave outwelleth,
The babbling runnel crispeth,
The hollow grot replieth
Where Claribel low-lieth.

LILIAN.

Airy, fairy Lilian,
Flitting, fairy Lilian,
When I ask her if she love me.
Clasps her tiny hands above me,
Laughing all she can;
She'll not tell me if she love me,
Cruel little Lilian.

When my passion seeks
Pleasance in love-sighs,
She, looking through and through me
Thoroughly to undo me,
Smiling, never speaks:
So innocent-arch, so cunning-simple,
From beneath her gathered wimple
Glancing with black-beaded eyes,
Till the lightning laughters dimple
The baby-roses in her cheeks;
Then away she flies.

Prithee weep, May Lilian!
Gayety without eclipse
Wearieth me, May Lilian:
Through my very heart it thrilleth
When from crimson-threaded lips
Silver-treble laughter trilleth:
Prithee weep, May Lilian.

Praying all I can,
If prayers will not hush thee,
Airy Lilian,
Like a rose-leaf I will crush thee,
Fairy Lilian.

ISABEL.

Eyes not down-dropt nor over-bright, but fed
With the clear-pointed flame of chastity,
Clear without heat, undying, tended by
Pure vestal thoughts in the translucent fane
Of her still spirit; locks not wide dispread,
Madonna-wise on either side her head;
Sweet lips whereon perpetually did reign
The summer calm of golden charity,
Were fixed shadows of thy fixed mood,
Revered Isabel, the crown and head,
The stately flower of female fortitude,
Of perfect wifehood and pure lowlihead.

The intuitive decision of a bright
And thorough-edged intellect to part
Error from crime; a prudence to withhold;
The laws of marriage charactered in gold
Upon the blanched tablets of her heart;
A love still burning upward, giving light
To read those laws; an accent very low
In blandishment, but a most silver flow
Of subtle-paced counsel in distress,
Right to the heart and brain, though undescried,
Winning its way with extreme gentleness
Through all the outworks of suspicious pride;
A courage to endure and to obey;
A hate of gossip parlance, and of sway,
Crowned Isabel, through all her placid life,
The queen of marriage, a most perfect wife.

The mellowed reflex of a winter moon;
A clear stream flowing with a muddy one,
Till in its onward current it absorbs
With swifter movement and in purer light
The vexed eddies of its wayward brother:
A leaning and upbearing parasite,
Clothing the stem, which else had fallen quite,

With clustered flower-bells and ambrosial orbs
Of rich fruit-bunches leaning on each other—
Shadow forth thee:—the world hath not another
(Though all her fairest forms are types of thee,
And thou of God in thy great charity)
Of such a finished chastened purity.

MARIANA.

"Mariana in the moated grange."—*Measure for Measure.*

I.

With blackest moss the flower-plots
Were thickly crusted, one and all:
The rusted nails fell from the knots
That held the peach to the garden-wall.
The broken sheds looked sad and strange:
Unlifted was the clinking latch;
Weeded and worn the ancient thatch
Upon the lonely moated grange.
She only said, "My life is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

II.

Her tears fell with the dews at even;
Her tears fell ere the dews were dried;
She could not look on the sweet heaven,
Either at morn or eventide.
After the flitting of the bats,
When thickest dark did trance the sky,
She drew her casement-curtain by,
And glanced athwart the glooming flats.
She only said, "The night is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

III.

Upon the middle of the night,
  Waking she heard the night-fowl crow:
The cock sung out an hour ere light:
  From the dark fen the oxen's low
Came to her: without hope of change,
  In sleep she seemed to walk forlorn,
  Till cold winds woke the gray-eyed morn
About the lonely moated grange.
    She only said, "The day is dreary,
      He cometh not," she said;
    She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
      I would that I were dead!"

IV.

About a stone-cast from the wall
  A sluice with blackened waters slept,
And o'er it many, round and small,
  The clustered marish-mosses crept.
Hard by a poplar shook alway,
  All silver-green with gnarled bark:
  For leagues no other tree did mark
The level waste, the rounding gray.
    She only said, "My life is dreary,
      He cometh not," she said;
    She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
      I would that I were dead!"

V.

And ever when the moon was low,
  And the shrill winds were up and away,
In the white curtain, to and fro,
  She saw the gusty shadow sway.
But when the moon was very low,
  And wild winds bound within their cell,
  The shadow of the poplar fell
Upon her bed, across her brow.
    She only said, "The night is dreary,
      He cometh not," she said;

She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

VI.

All day within the dreamy house
The doors upon their hinges creaked;
The blue fly sung i' the pane; the mouse
Behind the mouldering wainscot shrieked,
Or from the crevice peered about.
Old faces glimmered through the doors,
Old footsteps trod the upper floors,
Old voices called her from without.
She only said, "My life is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

VII.

The sparrow's chirrup on the roof,
The slow clock ticking, and the sound
Which to the wooing wind aloof
The poplar made, did all confound
Her sense; but most she loathed the hour
When the thick-moted sunbeam lay
Athwart the chambers, and the day
Was sloping toward his western bower.
Then, said she, "I am very dreary,
He will not come," she said;
She wept, "I am aweary, aweary,
O God! that I were dead!"

TO ———.

Clear-headed friend, whose joyful scorn,
Edged with sharp laughter, cuts atwain
The knots that tangle human creeds,
The wounding cords that bind and strain

The heart until it bleeds,
Ray-fringed eyelids of the morn
Roof not a glance so keen as thine:
If aught of prophecy be mine,
Thou wilt not live in vain.

Low-cowering shall the Sophist sit;
Falsehood shall bare her plaited brow:
Fair-fronted Truth shall droop not now
With shrilling shafts of subtle wit.
Nor martyr-flames nor trenchant swords
Can do away that ancient lie:
A gentler death shall Falsehood die,
Shot through and though with cunning words.

Weak Truth, a-leaning on her crutch,
Wan, wasted Truth, in her utmost need,
Thy kingly intellect shall feed,
Until she be an athlete bold,
And weary with a finger's touch
Those writhed limbs of lightning speed;
Like that strange angel which of old,
Until the breaking of the light,
Wrestled with wandering Israel,
Past Yabbok brook the livelong night,
And heaven's mazed signs stood still
In the dim tract of Penuel.

MADELINE.

Thou art not steeped in golden languors,
No tranced summer calm is thine,
Ever varying Madeline.
Through light and shadow thou dost range,
Sudden glances, sweet and strange,
Delicious spites, and darling angers,
And airy forms of flitting change.

Smiling, frowning, evermore,
Thou are perfect in love-lore.
Revealings deep and clear are thine
Of wealthy smiles: but who may know
Whether smile or frown be fleeter?
Whether smile or frown be sweeter,
Who may know?

Frowns perfect-sweet along the brow
Light-glooming over eyes divine,
Like little clouds sun-fringed, are thine,
Ever varying Madeline.
Thy smile and frown are not aloof
From one another,
Each to each is dearest brother;
Hues of the silken sheeny woof
Momently shot into each other.
All the mystery is thine;
Smiling, frowning, evermore,
Thou art perfect in love-lore,
Ever varying Madeline.

A subtle, sudden flame,
By veering passion fanned,
About thee breaks and dances
When I would kiss thy hand,
The flush of angered shame
O'erflows thy calmer glances,
And o'er black brows drops down
A sudden-curved frown:
But when I turn away,
Thou, willing me to stay,

Wooest not, nor vainly wranglest,
But, looking fixedly the while,
All my bounding heart entanglest
In a golden-netted smile;
Then in madness and in bliss,
If my lips should dare to kiss

Thy taper fingers amorously,
Again thou blushest angerly;
And o'er black brows drops down
A sudden-curved frown.

SONG.—THE OWL.

When cats run home and light is come,
And dew is cold upon the ground,
And the far-off stream is dumb,
And the whirring sail goes round,
And the whirring sail goes round;
Alone and warming his five wits,
The white owl in the belfry sits.

When merry milkmaids click the latch,
And rarely smells the new-mown hay,
And the cock hath sung beneath the thatch
Twice or thrice his roundelay,
Twice or thrice his roundelay;
Alone and warming his five wits,
The white owl in the belfry sits.

SECOND SONG.

TO THE SAME.

Thy tuwhits are lulled, I wot,
Thy tuwhoos of yesternight,
Which upon the dark afloat,
So took echo with delight,
So took echo with delight,
That her voice, untuneful grown,
Wears all day a fainter tone.

I would mock thy chant anew;
But I cannot mimic it;
Not a whit of thy tuwhoo,
Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,
Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,
With a lengthened loud halloo,
Tuwhoo, tuwhit, tuwhit, tuwhoo-o-o.

RECOLLECTIONS
OF
THE ARABIAN NIGHTS.

I.

When the breeze of a joyful dawn blew free
In the silken sail of infancy,
The tide of time flowed back with me,
The forward-flowing tide of time;
And many a sheeny summer-morn,
Adown the Tigris I was borne,
By Bagdat's shrines of fretted gold,
High-walled gardens green and old;
True Mussulman was I and sworn,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

II.

Anight my shallop, rustling through
The low and bloomed foliage, drove
The fragrant, glistening deeps, and clove
The citron-shadows in the blue:
By garden porches on the brim,
The costly doors flung open wide,
Gold glittering through lamplight dim,
And broidered sofas on each side:
In sooth it was a goodly time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

III.

Often, where clear-stemmed platans guard
The outlet, did I turn away
The boat-head down a broad canal
From the main river sluiced, where all
The sloping of the moonlit sward
Was damask-work, and deep inlay
Of braided blooms unmown, which crept
Adown to where the waters slept.
A goodly place, a goodly time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

IV.

A motion from the river won
Ridged the smooth level, bearing on
My shallop through the star-strown calm,
Until another night in night
I entered, from the clearer light,
Imbowered vaults of pillared palm,
Imprisoning sweets, which, as they clomb
Heavenward, were stayed beneath the dome
Of hollow boughs.— A goodly time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

V.

Still onward; and the clear canal
Is rounded to as clear a lake.
From the green rivage many a fall
Of diamond rillets musical,
Through little crystal arches low
Down from the central fountain's flow
Fallen silver-chiming, seemed to shake
The sparkling flints beneath the prow.
A goodly place, a goodly time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid

VI.

Above through many a bowery turn
A walk with vary-colored shells
Wandered engrained. On either side
All round about the fragrant marge
From fluted vase, and brazen urn,
In order, eastern flowers large,
Some dropping low their crimson bells
Half-closed, and others studded wide
With disks and tiars, fed the time
With odor in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

VII.

Far off, and where the lemon-grove
In closest coverture upsprung,
The living airs of middle night
Died round the bulbul as he sung;
Not he: but something which possessed
The darkness of the world, delight,
Life, anguish, death, immortal love,
Ceasing not, mingled, unrepressed,
Apart from place, withholding time,
But flattering the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

VIII.

Black the garden-bowers and grots
Slumbered: the solemn palms were ranged
Above, unwooed of summer wind:
A sudden splendor from behind
Flushed all the leaves with rich gold-green,
And, flowing rapidly between
Their interspaces, counterchanged
The level lake with diamond-plots
Of dark and bright. A lovely time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

IX.

Dark-blue the deep sphere overhead,
Distinct with vivid stars inlaid,
Grew darker from that under-flame:
So, leaping lightly from the boat,
With silver anchor left afloat,
In marvel whence that glory came
Upon me, as in sleep I sank
In cool soft turf upon the bank,
Entranced with that place and time,
So worthy of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

X.

Thence through the garden I was drawn—
A realm of pleasance, many a mound,
And many a shadow-chequered lawn
Full of the city's stilly sound,
And deep myrrh-thickets blowing round
The stately cedar, tamarisks,
Thick rosaries of scented thorn,
Tall orient shrubs, and obelisks
Graven with emblems of the time,
In honor of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

XI.

With dazed vision unawares
From the long alley's lattice shade
Emerged, I came upon the great
Pavilion of the Caliphat.
Right to the carven cedarn doors,
Flung inward over spangled floors,
Broad-based flights of marble stairs
Ran up with golden balustrade,
After the fashion of the time,
And humor of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

XII.

The fourscore windows all alight
As with the quintessence of flame,
A million tapers flaring bright
From twisted silvers looked to shame
The hollow-vaulted dark, and streamed
Upon the mooned domes aloof
In inmost Bagdat, till there seemed
Hundreds of crescents on the roof
Of night new risen, that marvellous time,
To celebrate the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

XIII.

Then stole I up, and trancedly
Gazed on the Persian girl alone,
Serene with argent-lidded eyes,
Amorous, and lashes like to rays
Of darkness, and a brow of pearl
Tressed with redolent ebony,
In many a dark delicious curl,
Flowing beneath her rose-hued zone;
The sweetest lady of the time,
Well worthy of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

XIV.

Six columns, three on either side,
Pure silver, underprop a rich
Throne of the massive ore, from which
Down-drooped, in many a floating fold,
Engarlanded and diapered
With inwrought flowers, a cloth of gold.
Thereon, his deep eye laughter-stirred
With merriment of kingly pride,
Sole star of all that place and time,
I saw him—in his golden prime,
The good Haroun Alraschid!

ODE TO MEMORY.

I.

Thou who stealest fire,
From the fountains of the past,
To glorify the present; oh, haste,
Visit my low desire!
Strengthen me, enlighten me!
I faint in this obscurity,
Thou dewy dawn of memory.

II.

Come not as thou camest of late,
Flinging the gloom of yesternight
On the white day; but robed in softened light
Of orient state.
Whilome thou camest with the morning mist,
Even as a maid, whose stately brow
The dew-impearled winds of dawn have kissed,
When she, as thou,
Stays on her floating locks the lovely freight
Of overflowing blooms, and earliest shoots
Of orient green, giving safe pledge of fruits,
Which in wintertide shall star
The black earth with brilliance rare.

III.

Whilome thou camest with the morning mist,
And with the evening cloud,
Showering thy gleaned wealth into my open breast,
(Those peerless flowers which in the rudest wind
Never grow sere,
When rooted in the garden of the mind,
Because they are the earliest of the year.)
Nor was the night thy shroud.
In sweet dreams softer than unbroken rest
Thou leddest by the hand thy infant Hope.
The eddying of her garments caught from thee

The light of thy great presence; and the cope
Of the half-attained futurity,
Though deep, not fathomless,
Was cloven with the million stars that tremble
O'er the deep mind of dauntless infancy.
Small thought was there of life's distress;
For sure she deemed no mist of earth could dull
Those spirit-thrilling eyes so keen and beautiful:
Sure she was nigher to heaven's spheres,
Listening the lordly music flowing from
The illimitable years.
O strengthen me, enlighten me!
I faint in this obscurity,
Thou dewy dawn of memory.

IV.

Come forth, I charge thee, arise,
Thou of the many tongues, the myriad eyes!
Thou comest not with shows of flaunting vines
Unto mine inner eye,
Divinest memory!
Thou wert not nursed by the waterfall
Which ever sounds and shines
A pillar of white light upon the wall
Of purple cliffs, aloof descried:
Come from the woods that belt the gray hill-side
The seven elms, the poplars four,
That stand beside my father's door,
And chiefly from the brook that loves
To purl o'er matted cress and ribbed sand,
Or dimple in the dark of rushy coves,
Drawing into his narrow earthen urn,
In every elbow and turn,
The filtered tribute of the rough woodland.
O! hither lead thy feet!
Pour round mine ears the livelong bleat
Of the thick-fleeced sheep from wattled folds,
Upon the ridged wolds,
When the first matin-song hath wakened loud

Over the dark dewy earth forlorn,
What time the amber morn
Forth gushes from beneath a low-hung cloud.

V.

Large dowries doth the raptured eye
To the young spirit present
When first she is wed;
And like a bride of old
In triumph led,
With music and sweet showers
Of festal flowers,
Unto the dwelling she must sway.
Well hast thou done, great artist Memory,
In setting round thy first experiment
With royal framework of wrought gold;
Needs must thou dearly love thy first essay,
And foremost in thy various gallery
Place it, where sweetest sunlight falls
Upon the storied walls;
For the discovery
And newness of thine art so pleased thee,
That all which thou hast drawn of fairest
Or boldest since, but lightly weighs
With thee unto the love thou bearest
The first-born of thy genius. Artist-like,
Ever retiring thou dost gaze
On the prime labor of thine early days:
No matter what the sketch might be;
Whether the high field on the bushless Pike,
Or even a sand-built ridge
Of heaped hills that mound the sea,
Overblown with murmurs harsh,
Or even a lowly cottage whence we see
Stretched wide and wild the waste enormous marsh,
Where from the frequent bridge,
Like emblems of infinity,
The trenched waters run from sky to sky;

Or a garden bowered close
With plaited alleys of the trailing ro·e,
Long alleys falling down to twilight grots,
Or opening upon level plots
Of crowned lilies, standing near
Purple-spiked lavender:
Whether in after life retired
From brawling storms,
From weary wind,
With youthful fancy reinspired,
We may hold converse with all forms
Of the many-sided mind,
And those whom passion had not blinded,
Subtle-thoughted, myriad-minded,
My friend, with you to live alone,
Were how much better than to own
A crown, a sceptre, and a throne.
O strengthen me, enlighten me!
I faint in this obscurity,
Thou dewy dawn of memory.

SONG.

I.

A SPIRIT haunts the year's last hours,
Dwelling amid these yellowing bowers:
To himself he talks;
For at eventide, listening earnestly,
At his work you may hear him sob and sigh
In the walks;
Earthward he boweth the heavy stalks
Of the mouldering flowers:
Heavily hangs the broad sunflower
Over its grave i' the earth so chilly;
Heavily hangs the hollyhock,
Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

II.

The air is damp, and hushed, and close,
As a sick man's room when he taketh repose
An hour before death;
My very heart faints and my whole soul grieves
At the moist rich smell of the rotting leaves,
And the breath
Of the fading edges of box beneath,
And the year's last rose.
Heavily hangs the broad sunflower
Over its grave i' the earth so chilly;
Heavily hangs the hollyhock,
Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

ADELINE.

Mystery of mysteries,
Faintly smiling Adeline,
Scarce of earth nor all divine,
Nor unhappy, nor at rest,
But beyond expression fair,
With thy floating flaxen hair;
Thy rose-lips and full blue eyes
Take the heart from out my breast.
Wherefore those dim looks of thine,
Shadowy, dreaming Adeline?

Whence that aery bloom of thine,
Like a lily which the sun
Looks through in his sad decline,
And a rose-bush leans upon,
Thou that faintly smilest still,
As a Naiad in a well,
Looking at the set of day,
Or a phantom two hours old
Of a maiden past away,

Ere the placid lips be cold?
Wherefore those faint smiles of thine,
Spiritual Adeline?

What hope or fear or joy is thine?
Who talketh with thee, Adeline?
For sure thou art not all alone:
Do beating hearts of salient springs
Keep measure with thine own?
Hast thou heard the butterflies
What they say betwixt their wings?
Or in stillest evenings
With what voice the violet woos
To his heart the silver dews?
Or when little airs arise,
How the merry bluebell rings
To the mosses underneath?
Hast thou looked upon the breath
Of the lilies at sunrise?
Wherefore that faint smile of thine,
Shadowy, dreaming Adeline?

Some honey-converse feeds thy mind,
Some spirit of a crimson rose
In love with thee forgets to close
His curtains, wasting odorous sighs
All night long on darkness blind.
What aileth thee? whom waitest thou
With thy softened, shadowed brow,
And those dew-lit eyes of thine,
Thou faint smiler, Adeline?

Lovest thou the doleful wind
When thou gazest at the skies?
Doth the low-tongued Orient
Wander from the side o' the morn,
Dripping with Sabæan spice
On thy pillow, lowly bent
With melodious airs lovelorn,

Breathing light against thy face,
While his locks a-dropping twined
Round thy neck in subtle ring
Make a carcanet of rays
And ye talk together still,
In the language wherewith Spring
Letters cowslips on the hill?
Hence that look and smile of thine,
Spiritual Adeline.

A CHARACTER.

I.

With a half-glance upon the sky
At night he said, "The wanderings
Of this most intricate Universe
Teach me the nothingness of things."
Yet could not all creation pierce
Beyond the bottom of his eye.

II.

He spake of beauty: that the dull
Saw no divinity in grass,
Life in dead stones, or spirit in air;
Then looking as 'twere in a glass,
He smoothed his chin and sleeked his hair,
And said the earth was beautiful.

III.

He spake of virtue: not the gods
More purely, when they wish to charm
Pallas and Juno sitting by:
And with a sweeping of the arm,
And a lack-lustre dead-blue eye,
Devolved his rounded periods.

IV.

Most delicately hour by hour
He canvassed human mysteries,
And trod on silk, as if the winds
Blew his own praises in his eyes,
And stood aloof from other minds
In impotence of fancied power.

V.

With lips depressed as he were meek,
Himself unto himself he sold:
Upon himself himself did feed:
Quiet, dispassionate, and cold,
And other than his form of creed,
With chiselled features clear and sleek.

THE POET.

The poet in a golden clime was born,
With golden stars above;
Dowered with the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn,
The love of love.

He saw through life and death, through good and ill,
He saw through his own soul.
The marvel of the everlasting will,
An open scroll,

Before him lay: with echoing feet he threaded
The secret'st walks of fame:
The viewless arrows of his thoughts were headed
And winged with flame,

Like Indian reeds blown from his silver tongue,
And of so fierce a flight,
From Calpe unto Caucasus they sung,
Filling with light

And vagrant melodies the winds which bore
Them earthward till they lit;
Then, like the arrow-seeds of the field-flower,
The fruitful wit,

Cleaving, took root, and springing forth anew
Where'er they fell, behold,
Like to the mother plant in semblance, grew
A flower all gold,

And bravely furnished all abroad to fling
The winged shafts of truth,
To throng with stately blooms the breathing spring
Of Hope and Youth.

So many minds did gird their orbs with beams,
Though one did fling the fire.
Heaven flowed upon the soul in many dreams
Of high desire.

Thus truth was multiplied on truth, the world
Like one great garden showed,
And through the wreaths of floating dark upcurled
Rare sunrise flowed.

And Freedom reared in that august sunrise
Her beautiful bold brow,
When rites and forms before his burning eyes
Melted like snow.

There was no blood upon her maiden robes
Sunned by those orient skies;
But round about the circles of the globes
Of her keen eyes

And in her raiment's hem was traced in flame
Wisdom, a name to shake
All evil dreams of power—a sacred name.
And when she spake,

Her words did gather thunder as they ran,
And as the lightning to the thunder
Which follows it, riving the spirit of man,
Making earth wonder,

So was their meaning to her words. No sword
Of wrath her right arm whirled,
But one poor poet's scroll, and with *his* word
She shook the world.

THE POET'S MIND.

I.

Vex not thou the poet's mind
With thy shallow wit:
Vex not thou the poet's mind;
For thou canst not fathom it.
Clear and bright it should be ever,
Flowing like a crystal river;
Bright as light, and clear as wind.

II.

Dark-browed sophist, come not anear;
All the place is holy ground;
Hollow smile and frozen sneer
Come not here.
Holy water will I pour
Into every spicy flower
Of the laurel-shrubs that hedge it around.
The flowers would faint at your cruel cheer.
In your eye there is death,
There is frost in your breath
Which would blight the plants.
Where you stand you cannot hear
From the groves within
The wild-bird's din.
In the heart of the garden the merry bird chants,

It would fall to the ground if you came in.
In the middle leaps a fountain
Like sheet lightning,
Ever brightening
With a low melodious thunder;
All day and all night it is ever drawn
From the brain of the purple mountain
Which stands in the distance yonder:
It springs on a level of bowery lawn,
And the mountain draws it from Heaven above,
And it sings a song of undying love;
And yet, though its voice be so clear and full,
You never would hear it—your ears are so dull;
So keep where you are: you are foul with sin;
It would shrink to the earth if you came in.

THE DYING SWAN.

The plain was grassy, wild and bare,
Wide, wild, and open to the air,
Which had built up everywhere
An under-roof of doleful gray.
With an inner voice the river ran,
Adown it floated a dying swan,
And loudly did lament.
It was the middle of the day.
Ever the weary wind went on,
And took the reed-tops as it went.

Some blue peaks in the distance rose,
And white against the cold-white sky
Shone out their crowning snows.
One willow over the river wept,
And shook the wave as the wind did sigh;
Above in the wind was the swallow,
Chasing itself as its own wild will,
And far through the marish green and still

The tangled watercourses slept,
Shot over with purple, and green and yellow.

The wild swan's death-hymn took the soul
Of that waste place with joy
Hidden in sorrow: at first to the ear
The warble was low, and full and clear;
And floating about the under-sky,
Prevailing in weakness, the coronach stole
Sometimes afar, and sometimes anear;
But anon her awful jubilant voice,
With a music strange and manifold,
Flowed forth on a carol free and bold:
As when a mighty people rejoice
With shawms, and with cymbals, and harps of gold,
And the tumult of their acclaim is rolled
Through the open gates of the city afar,
To the shepherd who watcheth the evening star.
And the creeping mosses and clambering weeds,
And the willow-branches hoar and dank,
And the wavy swell of the soughing reeds,
And the wave-worn horns of the echoing bank,
And the silvery marish-flowers that throng
The desolate creeks and pools among,
Were flooded over with eddying song.

A DIRGE.

I.

Now is done thy long day's work;
Fold thy palms across thy breast,
Fold thine arms, turn to thy rest.
Let them rave.
Shadows of the silver birk
Sweep the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

II.

Thee nor carketh care nor slander;
Nothing but the small cold worm
Fretteth thine enshrouded form.
Let them rave.
Light and shadow ever wander
O'er the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

III.

Thou wilt not turn upon thy bed;
Chanteth not the brooding bee
Sweeter tones than calumny?
Let them rave.
Thou wilt never raise thine head
From the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

IV.

Crocodiles wept tears for thee;
The woodbine and eglatere
Drip sweeter dews than traitor's tear.
Let them rave.
Rain makes music in the tree
O'er the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

V.

Round thee blow, self-pleached deep
Bramble-roses, faint and pale,
And long purples of the dale.
Let them rave.
These in every shower creep
Through the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

VI.

The gold-eyed kingcups fine,
The frail bluebell peereth over

Rare broidry of the purple clover.
Let them rave.
Kings have no such couch as thine.
As the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

VII.

Wild words wander here and there;
God's great gift of speech abused
Makes thy memory confused—
But let them rave.
The balm-cricket carols clear
In the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

LOVE AND DEATH.

WHAT time the mighty moon was gathering light,
Love paced the thymy plots of Paradise,
And all about him rolled his lustrous eyes;
When, turning round a cassia, full in view
Death, walking all alone beneath a yew,
And talking to himself, first met his sight:
"You must begone," said Death; "these walks are mine."
Love wept and spread his sheeny vans for flight;
Yet ere he parted said, "This hour is thine;
Thou art the shadow of life, and as the tree
Stands in the sun and shadows all beneath,
So in the light of great eternity
Life eminent creates the shade of death;
The shadow passeth when the tree shall fall,
But I shall reign forever over all."

THE BALLAD OF ORIANA.

My heart is wasted with my woe,
Oriana.
There is no rest for me below,
Oriana.
When the long dun wolds are ribbed with snow,
And loud the Norland whirlwinds blow,
Oriana,
Alone I wander to and fro,
Oriana.

Ere the light on dark was growing,
Oriana,
At midnight the cock was crowing,
Oriana:
Winds were blowing, waters flowing,
We heard the steeds to battle going,
Oriana;
Aloud the hollow bugle blowing,
Oriana.

In the yew-wood, black as night,
Oriana,
Ere I rode into the fight,
Oriana,
While blissful tears blinded my sight,
By star-shine and by moonlight,
Oriana,
I to thee my troth did plight,
Oriana.

She stood upon the castle wall,
Oriana:
She watched my crest among them all,
Oriana:
She saw me fight, she heard me call,
When forth there stept a foeman tall,
Oriana,

Atween me and the castle wall,
Oriana.

The bitter arrow went aside,
Oriana:
The false, false arrow went aside,
Oriana:
The damned arrow glanced aside,
And pierced thy heart, my love, my bride,
Oriana!
Thy heart, my life, my love, my bride,
Oriana!

O! narrow, narrow was the space,
Oriana.
Loud, loud rung out the bugle's brays,
Oriana.
O! deathful stabs were dealt apace,
The battle deepened in its place,
Oriana;
But I was down upon my face,
Oriana.

They should have stabbed me where I lay,
Oriana!
How could I rise and come away,
Oriana?
How could I look upon the day?
They should have stabbed me where I lay.
Oriana—
They should have trod me into clay,
Oriana.

O! breaking heart that will not break,
Oriana;
O! pale, pale face so sweet and meek,
Oriana.
Thou smilest, but thou dost not speak,

And then the tears run down my cheek,
Oriana :
What wantest thou ? whom dost thou seek,
Oriana ?

I cry aloud : none hear my cries,
Oriana.
Thou comest atween me and the skies,
Oriana.
I feel the tears of blood arise
Up from my heart unto my eyes,
Oriana.
Within thy heart my arrow lies,
Oriana.

O cursed hand ! oh cursed blow !
Oriana !
O happy thou that liest low,
Oriana !
All night the silence seems to flow
Beside me in my utter woe,
Oriana.
A weary, weary way I go,
Oriana.

When Norland winds pipe down the sea,
Oriana,
I walk, I dare not think of thee,
Oriana.
Thou liest beneath the greenwood tree,
I dare not die and come to thee,
Oriana.
I hear the roaring of the sea,
Oriana.

CIRCUMSTANCE.

Two children in two neighbor villages
Playing mad pranks along the heathy leas;
Two strangers meeting at a festival;
Two lovers whispering by an orchard wall;
Two lives bound fast in one with golden ease;
Two graves grass-green beside a gray church-tower,
Washed with still rains and daisy-blossomed;
Two children in one hamlet born and bred;
So runs the round of life from hour to hour.

THE MERMAN.

Who would be
A merman bold
Sitting alone,
Singing alone
Under the sea,
With a crown of gold,
On a throne?

I would be a merman bold;
I would sit and sing the whole of the day;
I would fill the sea-halls with a voice of power,
But at night I would roam abroad, and play
With the mermaids in and out of the rocks,
Dressing their hair with the white sea-flower;
And holding them back by their flowing locks,
I would kiss them often under the sea,
And kiss them again till they kissed me
Laughingly, laughingly;
And then we would wander away, away
To the pale-green sea-groves straight and high,
Chasing each other merrily.

There would be neither moon nor star;
But the wave would make music above us afar—
Low thunder and light in the magic night—
Neither moon nor star.
We would call aloud in the dreamy dells,
Call to each other and whoop and cry
All night, merrily, merrily;
They would pelt me with starry spangles and shells
Laughing and clapping their hands between,
All night, merrily, merrily;
But I would throw them back in mine
Turkis and agate and almondine:
Then leaping out upon them unseen,
I would kiss them often under the sea,
And kiss them again till they kissed me
Laughingly, laughingly.
O! what a happy life were mine
Under the hollow-hung ocean green!
Soft are the moss-beds under the sea;
We would live merrily, merrily.

THE MERMAID.

Who would be
A mermaid fair,
Singing alone,
Combing her hair
Under the sea,
In a golden curl
With a comb of pearl,
On a throne?

I would be a mermaid fair;
I would sing to myself the whole of the day;
With a comb of pearl I would comb my hair;
And still as I combed I would sing and say,
"Who is it loves me? who loves not me?"

I would comb my hair till my ringlets would fall,
Low adown, low adown,
From under my starry sea-bud crown
Low adown and around,
And I should look like a fountain of gold
Springing alone
With a shrill inner sound,
Over the throne
In the midst of the hall;
Till that great sea-snake under the sea
From his coiled sleeps in the central deeps
Would slowly trail himself sevenfold
Round the hall where I sate, and look in at the gate
With his large calm eyes for the love of me.
And all the mermen under the sea
Would feel their immortality
Die in their hearts for the love of me.

But at night I would wander away, away,
I would fling on each side my low-flowing locks
And lightly vault from the throne and play
With the mermen in and out of the rocks;
We would run to and fro, and hide and seek,
On the broad sea-wolds i' the crimson shells,
Whose silvery spikes are nighest the sea.
But if any came near, I would call and shriek,
And adown the steep like a wave I would leap
From the diamond ledges that jut from the dells.
For I would not be kissed by all who would list,
Of the bold merry mermen under the sea;
They would sue me, and woo me, and flatter me,
In the purple twilights under the sea;
But the king of them all would carry me,
Woo me, and win me, and marry me,
In the branching jaspers under the sea;
Then all the dry pied things that be
In the hueless mosses under the sea
Would curl round my silver feet silently,
All looking up for the love of me.

And if I should carol aloud, from aloft
All things that are forked, and horned, and soft,
Would lean out from the hollow sphere of the sea,
All looking down for the love of me.

SONNET TO J. M. K.

My hope and heart is with thee—thou wilt be
A latter Luther, and a soldier-priest
To scare church-harpies from the master's feast;
Our dusted velvets have much need of thee:
Thou art no sabbath-drawler of old saws,
Distilled from some worm-cankered homily;
But spurred at heart with fieriest energy
To embattail and to wall about thy cause
With iron-worded proof, hating to hark
The humming of the drowsy pulpit-drone
Half God's good sabbath, while the worn-out clerk
Brow-beats his desk below. Thou from a throne
Mounted in heaven wilt shoot into the dark
Arrows of lightnings. I will stand and mark.

POEMS.

(PUBLISHED 1832.)

THE LADY OF SHALOTT.

PART I.

On either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold and meet the sky;
And through the field the road runs by
To many-towered Camelot;
And up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow
Round an island there below,
The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
Little breezes dusk and shiver
Through the wave that runs forever
By the island in the river
Flowing down to Camelot.
Four gray walls, and four gray towers,
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle embowers
The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veiled,
Slide the heavy barges trailed

By slow horses; and unhailed,
The shallop flitteth silken-sailed,
Skimming down to Camelot:
But who hath seen her wave her hand?
Or at the casement seen her stand?
Or is she known in all the land,
The Lady of Shalott?

Only reapers, reaping early
In among the bearded barley,
Hear a song that echoes cheerly
From the river winding clearly,
Down to towered Camelot:
And by the moon the reaper weary,
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
Listening, whispers "'Tis the fairy
Lady of Shalott."

PART II.

THERE she weaves by night and day
A magic web with colors gay.
She has heard a whisper say,
A curse is on her if she stay
To look down to Camelot.
She knows not what the curse may be,
And so she weaveth steadily,
And little other care hath she,
The Lady of Shalott.

And moving through a mirror clear
That hangs before her all the year,
Shadows of the world appear.
There she sees the highway near
Winding down to Camelot:
There the river eddy whirls,
And there the surly village-churls,
And the red cloaks of market-girls,
Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
An abbot on an ambling pad,
Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,
Or long-haired page in crimson clad,
Goes by to towered Camelot;
And sometimes through the mirror blue
The knights come riding two and two:
She hath no loyal knight and true,
The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights
To weave the mirror's magic sights,
For often through the silent nights
A funeral, with plumes and lights,
And music, went to Camelot:
Or when the moon was overhead,
Came two young lovers lately wed;
"I am half-sick of shadows," said
The Lady of Shalott.

PART III.

A BOW-SHOT from her bower-eaves,
He rode between the barley sheaves,
The sun came dazzling through the leaves,
And flamed upon the brazen greaves
Of bold Sir Lancelot.
A redcross knight forever kneeled
To a lady in his shield,
That sparkled on the yellow field,
Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glittered free,
Like to some branch of stars we see
Hung in the golden Galaxy.
The bridle bells rang merrily
As he rode down to Camelot:
And from his blazoned baldric slung
A mighty silver bugle hung,

And as he rode his armor rung,
Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather
Thick-jewelled shone the saddle-leather,
The helmet and the helmet-feather
Burned like one burning flame together,
As he rode down to Camelot.
As often through the purple night,
Below the starry clusters bright,
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glowed;
On burnished hooves his war-horse trode;
From underneath his helmet flowed
His coal-black curls as on he rode,
As he rode down to Camelot.
From the bank and from the river
He flashed into the crystal mirror,
"Tirra lirra," by the river
Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces through the room,
She saw the water-lily bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
She looked down to Camelot.
Out flew the web and floated wide;
The mirror cracked from side to side;
"The curse is come upon me," cried
The Lady of Shalott.

PART IV.

In the stormy east-wind straining,
The pale yellow woods were waning,
The broad stream in his banks complaining,
Heavily the low sky raining
Over towered Camelot;

Down she came and found a boat
Beneath a willow left afloat,
And round about the prow she wrote
The Lady of Shalott.

And down the river's dim expanse—
Like some bold seër in a trance,
Seeing all his own mischance—
With a glassy countenance
Did she look to Camelot.
And at the closing of the day
She loosed the chain, and down she lay;
The broad stream bore her far away,
The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white
That loosely flew to left and right—
The leaves upon her falling light—
Through the noises of the night
She floated down to Camelot:
And as the boat-head wound along
The willowy hills and fields among,
They heard her singing her last song,
The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
Till her blood was frozen slowly,
And her eyes were darkened wholly,
Turned to towered Camelot;
For ere she reached upon the tide
The first house by the water-side,
Singing in her song she died,
The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,
By garden-wall and gallery,
A gleaming shape she floated by,
Dead-pale between the houses high,
Silent into Camelot.

Out upon the wharves they came,
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,
And round the prow they read her name,
The Lady of Shalott.

Who is this? and what is here?
And in the lighted palace near
Died the sound of royal cheer;
And they crossed themselves for fear,
All the knights at Camelot:
But Lancelot mused a little space;
He said, "She has a lovely face;
God in his mercy lend her grace,
The Lady of Shalott."

MARIANA IN THE SOUTH.

I.

With one black shadow at its feet,
The house through all the level shines,
Close-latticed to the brooding heat,
And silent in its dusty vines:
A faint-blue ridge upon the right,
An empty river-bed before,
And shallows on a distant shore,
In glaring sand and inlets bright.
But "Ave Mary," made she moan,
And "Ave Mary," night and morn,
And "Ah," she sang, "to be all alone,
To live forgotten, and love forlorn."

II.

She, as her carol sadder grew,
From brow and bosom slowly down,
Through rosy taper fingers drew
Her streaming curls of deepest brown
To left and right, and made appear,

Still-lighted in a secret shrine,
Her melancholy eyes divine,
The home of woe without a tear.
And "Ave Mary," was her moan,
"Madonna, sad is night and morn;"
And "Ah," she sang, "to be all alone,
To live forgotten, and love forlorn."

III.

Till all the crimson changed, and past
Into deep orange o'er the sea,
Low on her knees herself she cast,
Before Our Lady murmured she;
Complaining, "Mother, give me grace
To help me of my weary load."
And on the liquid mirror glowed
The clear perfection of her face.
"Is this the form," she made her moan,
"That won his praises night and morn?"
And "Ah," she said, "but I wake alone,
I sleep forgotten, I wake forlorn."

IV.

Nor bird would sing, nor lamb would bleat,
Nor any cloud would cross the vault,
But day increased from heat to heat,
On stony drought and steaming salt;
Till now at noon she slept again,
And seemed knee-deep in mountain grass,
And heard her native breezes pass,
And runlets babbling down the glen.
She breathed in sleep a lower moan,
And murmuring, as at night and morn,
She thought, "My spirit is here alone,
Walks forgotten, and is forlorn."

V.

Dreaming, she knew it was a dream:
She felt he was and was not there.

She woke: the babble of the stream
Fell, and without the steady glare
Shrank one sick willow sere and small.
The river-bed was dusty white;
And all the furnace of the light
Struck up against the blinding wall.
She whispered, with a stifled moan
More inward than at night or morn,
"Sweet Mother, let me not here alone
Live forgotten, and die forlorn."

VI.

And, rising, from her bosom drew
Old letters, breathing of her worth,
For "Love," they said, "must needs be true
To what is loveliest upon earth."
An image seemed to pass the door,
To look at her with slight, and say,
"But now thy beauty flows away,
So be alone for evermore."
"O cruel heart," she changed her tone,
"And cruel love, whose end is scorn,
Is this the end to be left alone,
To live forgotten, and die forlorn!"

VII.

But sometimes in the falling day
An image seemed to pass the door,
To look into her eyes and say,
"But thou shalt be alone no more."
And flaming downward over all
From heat to heat the day decreased,
And slowly rounded to the east
The one black shadow from the wall.
"The day to night," she made her moan,
"The day to night, the night to morn,
And day and night I am left alone,
To live forgotten, and love forlorn."

VIII.

At eve a dry cicala sung,
There came a sound as of the sea;
Backward the lattice-blind she flung,
And leaned upon the balcony.
There all in spaces rosy-bright
Large Hesper glittered on her tears,
And deepening through the silent spheres,
Heaven over Heaven rose the night.
And weeping then she made her moan.
"The night comes on that knows not morn
When I shall cease to be all alone,
To live forgotten, and love forlorn."

ELEANORE.

Thy dark eyes opened not,
Nor first revealed themselves to English air,
For there is nothing here,
Which, from the outward to the inward brought,
Moulded thy baby thought.
Far off from human neighborhood,
Thou wert born, on a summer morn,
A mile beneath the cedar-wood.
Thy bounteous forehead was not fanned
With breezes from our oaken glades,
But thou wert nursed in some delicious land
Of lavish lights, and floating shades:
And flattering thy childish thought
The oriental fairy brought,
At the moment of thy birth,
From old well-heads of haunted rills,
And the hearts of purple hills,
And shadowed coves on a sunny shore,
The choicest wealth of all the earth,

Jewel or shell, or starry ore,
To deck thy cradle, Eleänore.

Or the yellow-banded bees,
Through half-open lattices
Coming in the scented breeze,
Fed thee, a child, lying alone,
With whitest honey in fairy gardens culled
A glorious child, dreaming alone,
In silk-soft folds, upon yielding down,
With the hum of swarming bees
Into dreamful slumber lulled.

Who may minister to thee?
Summer herself should minister
To thee, with fruitage golden-rinded
On golden salvers, or it may be,
Youngest Autumn, in a bower
Grape-thickened from the light, and blinded
With many a deep-hued bell-like flower
Of fragrant trailers, when the air
Sleepeth over all the heaven,
And the crag that fronts the Even,
All along the shadowing shore,
Crimsons over an inland mere,
Eleänore!

How may full-sailed verse express,
How may measured words adore
The full-flowing harmony
Of thy swan-like stateliness,
Eleänore?
The luxuriant symmetry
Of thy floating gracefulness,
Eleänore?
Every turn and glance of thine,
Every lineament divine,
Eleänore,
And the steady sunset glow,

That stays upon thee? For in thee
Is nothing sudden, nothing single;
Like two streams of incense free
From one censer, in one shrine,
Thought and motion mingle,
Mingle ever. Motions flow
To one another, even as though
They were modulated so
To an unheard melody,
Which lives about thee, and a sweep
Of richest pauses, evermore
Drawn from each other mellow-deep;
Who may express thee, Eleänore?

I stand before thee, Eleänore;
I see thy beauty gradually unfold,
Daily and hourly, more and more.
I muse, as in a trance, the while
Slowly, as from a cloud of gold,
Comes out thy deep ambrosial smile.
I muse, as in a trance, whene'er
The languors of thy love-deep eyes
Float on to me. I would I were
So tranced, so rapt in ecstasies,
To stand apart, and to adore,
Gazing on thee for evermore,
Serene, imperial Eleänore!

Sometimes, with most intensity
Gazing, I seem to see
Thought folded over thought, smiling asleep,
Slowly awakened, grow so full and deep
In thy large eyes, that, overpowered quite,
I cannot veil, or droop my sight,
But am as nothing in its light:
As though a star, in inmost heaven set,
Even while we gaze on it,
Should slowly round his orb, and slowly grow
To a full face, there like a sun remain

Fixed—then as slowly fade again,
And draw itself to what it was before;
So full, so deep, so slow,
Thought seems to come and go
In thy large eyes, imperial Eleänore.

As thunderclouds that, hung on high,
Roofed the world with doubt and fear,
Floating through an evening atmosphere,
Grow golden all about the sky;
In thee all passion becomes passionless,
Touched by thy spirit's mellowness,
Losing his fire and active might
In a silent meditation,
Falling into a still delight,
And luxury of contemplation:
As waves that up a quiet cove
Rolling slide, and lying still
Shadow forth the banks at will;
Or sometimes they swell and move,
Pressing up against the land,
With motions of the outer sea:
And the selfsame influence
Controlleth all the soul and sense
Of Passion gazing upon thee.
His bowstring slackened, languid Love,
Leaning his cheek upon his hand,
Droops both his wings, regarding thee,
And so would languish evermore,
Serene, imperial Eleänore.

But when I see thee roam, with tresses unconfined,
While the amorous, odorous wind
Breathes low between the sunset and the moon;
Or, in a shadowy saloon,
On silken cushions half reclined;
I watch thy grace; and in its place
My heart a charmed slumber keeps,
While I muse upon thy face;

And a languid fire creeps
Through my veins to all my frame,
Dissolvingly and slowly: soon,
From thy rose-red lips MY name
Floweth; and then, as in a swoon,
With dinning sound my ears are rife,
My tremulous tongue faltereth,
I lose my color, I lose my breath,
I drink the cup of a costly death,
Brimmed with delirious draughts of warmest life.
I die with my delight, before
I hear what I would hear from thee;
Yet tell my name again to me.
I *would* be dying evermore,
So dying ever, Eleänore.

THE MILLER'S DAUGHTER.

I SEE the wealthy miller yet,
His double chin, his portly size,
And who that knew him could forget
The busy wrinkles round his eyes?
The slow wise smile that, round about
His dusty forehead dryly curled,
Seemed half-within and half-without,
And full of dealings with the world?

In yonder chair I see him sit,
Three fingers round the old silver cup—
I see his gray eyes twinkle yet
At his own jest—gray eyes lit up
With summer lightnings of a soul
So full of summer warmth, so glad,
So healthy, sound, and clear and whole,
His memory scarce can make me sad.

Yet fill my glass: give me one kiss:
My own sweet Alice, we must die.

There's somewhat in this world amiss
Shall be unriddled by and by.
There's somewhat flows to us in life,
But more is taken quite away.
Pray, Alice, pray, my darling wife,
That we may die the selfsame day.

Have I not found a happy earth?
I least should breathe a thought of pain.
Would God renew me from my birth
I'd almost live my life again.
So sweet it seems with thee to walk,
And once again to woo thee mine—
It seems in after-dinner talk
Across the walnuts and the wine—

To be the long and listless boy
Late left an orphan of the squire,
Where this old mansion mounted high
Looks down upon the village spire:
For even here, where I and you
Have lived and loved alone so long,
Each morn my sleep was broken through
By some wild skylark's matin song.

And oft I heard the tender dove
In firry woodlands making moan;
But ere I saw your eyes, my love,
I had no motion of my own.
For scarce my life with fancy played
Before I dreamed that pleasant dream—
Still hither thither idly swayed
Like those long mosses in the stream.

Or from the bridge I leaned to hear
The mill-dam rushing down with noise,
And see the minnows everywhere
In crystal eddies glance and poise,
The tall flag-flowers, when they sprung

Below the range of stepping stones,
And those three chestnuts near, that hung
In masses thick with milky cones.

But, Alice, what an hour was that,
When, after roving in the woods,
('Twas April then,) I came and sat
Below the chestnuts, when their buds
Were glistening to the breezy blue;
And on the slope, an absent fool,
I cast me down, nor thought of you,
But angled in the higher pool.

A love-song I had somewhere read,
An echo from a measured strain,
Beat time to nothing in my head
From some odd corner of the brain.
It haunted me, the morning long,
With weary sameness in the rhymes,
The phantom of a silent song,
That went and came a thousand times.

Then leapt a trout. In lazy mood
I watched the little circles die;
They past into the level flood,
And there a vision caught my eye;
The reflex of a beauteous form,
A glowing arm, a gleaming neck,
As when a sunbeam wavers warm
Within the dark and dimpled beck.

For you remember, you had set,
That morning, on the casement's edge
A long green box of mignonette,
And you were leaning from the ledge:
And when I raised my eyes, above
They met with two so full and bright—
Such eyes! I swear to you, my love,
That these have never lost their light.

I loved, and love dispelled the fear
That I should die an early death:
For love possessed the atmosphere,
And filled the breast with purer breath.
My mother thought, What ails the boy?
For I was altered, and began
To move about the house with joy,
And with the certain step of man.

I loved the brimming wave that swam
Through quiet meadows round the mill,
The sleepy pool above the dam,
The pool beneath it never still,
The meal-sacks on the whitened floor,
The dark round of the dripping wheel,
The very air about the door
Made misty with the floating meal.

And oft in ramblings on the wold,
When April nights began to blow,
And April's crescent glimmered cold,
I saw the village lights below;
I knew your taper far away,
And full at heart of trembling hope,
From off the wold I came, and lay
Upon the freshly-flowered slope.

The deep brook groaned beneath the mill;
And "by that lamp," I thought, "she sits!"
The white chalk-quarry from the hill
Gleamed to the flying moon by fits.
"O that I were beside her now!
O will she answer if I call?
O would she give me vow for vow,
Sweet Alice, if I told her all?"

Sometimes I saw you sit and spin;
And, in the pauses of the wind,
Sometimes I heard you sing within;

Sometimes your shadow crossed the blind;
At last you rose and moved the light,
And the long shadow of the chair
Flitted across into the night,
And all the casement darkened there.

But when at last I dared to speak,
The lanes, you know, were white with May
Your ripe lips moved not, but your cheek
Flushed like the coming of the day;
And so it was—half-sly, half-shy,
You would, and would not, little one!
Although I pleaded tenderly,
And you and I were all alone.

And slowly was my mother brought
To yield consent to my desire:
She wished me happy, but she thought
I might have looked a little higher;
And I was young—too young to wed:
"Yet must I love her for your sake;
Go fetch your Alice here," she said:
Her eyelid quivered as she spake.

And down I went to fetch my bride:
But, Alice, you were ill at ease;
This dress and that by turns you tried,
Too fearful that you should not please.
I loved you better for your fears,
I knew you could not look but well;
And dews, that would have fall'n in tears,
I kissed away before they fell.

I watched the little flutterings,
The doubt my mother would not see;
She spoke at large of many things,
And at the last she spoke of me;
And turning looked upon your face,
As near this door you sat apart,

And rose, and, with a silent grace
Approaching, pressed you heart to heart.

Ah, well—but sing the foolish song
I gave you, Alice, on the day
When, arm in arm, we went along,
A pensive pair, and you were gay
With bridal flowers—that I may seem,
As in the nights of old, to lie
Beside the mill-wheel in the stream,
While those full chestnuts whisper by.

It is the miller's daughter,
And she is grown so dear, so dear,
That I would be the jewel
That trembles at her ear:
For, hid in ringlets day and night,
I'd touch her neck so warm and white.

And I would be the girdle
About her dainty, dainty waist,
And her heart would beat against me
In sorrow and in rest:
And I should know if it beat right,
I'd clasp it round so close and tight.

And I would be the necklace,
And all day long to fall and rise
Upon her balmy bosom,
With her laughter or her sighs,
And I would lie so light, so light,
I scarce should be unclasped at night.

A trifle, sweet! which true love spells—
True love interprets—right alone.
His light upon the letter dwells,
For all the spirit is his own.
So, if I waste words now, in truth
You must blame Love. His early rage

Had force to make me rhyme in youth,
And makes me talk too much in age.

And now those vivid hours are gone,
Like mine own life to me thou art,
Where Past and Present, wound in one,
Do make a garland for the heart:
So sing that other song I made,
Half-angered with my happy lot,
The day, when in the chestnut shade
I found the blue Forget-me-not.

Love that hath us in the net,
Can he pass, and we forget?
Many suns arise and set.
Many a chance the years beget.
Love the gift is Love the debt.
Even so.
Love is hurt with jar and fret.
Love is made a vague regret.
Eyes with idle tears are wet.
Idle habit links us yet.
What is love? for we forget:
Ah, no! no!

Look through mine eyes with thine. True wife
Round my true heart thine arms entwine;
My other dearer life in life,
Look through my very soul with thine!
Untouched with any shade of years,
May those kind eyes forever dwell!
They have not shed a many tears,
Dear eyes, since first I knew them well.

Yet tears they shed: they had their part
Of sorrow: for when time was ripe,
The still affection of the heart

Became an outward breathing type,
That into stillness past again,
And left a want unknown before;
Although the loss that brought us pain,
That loss but made us love the more,

With farther lookings on. The kiss,
The woven arms, seem but to be
Weak symbols of the settled bliss,
The comfort, I have found in thee:
But that God bless thee, dear—who wrought
Two spirits to one equal mind—
With blessings beyond hope or thought,
With blessings which no words can find.

Arise, and let us wander forth
To yon old mill across the wolds;
For look, the sunset, south and north,
Winds all the vale in rosy folds,
And fires your narrow casement glass,
Touching the sullen pool below:
On the chalk-hill the bearded grass
Is dry and dewless. Let us go.

FATIMA.

I.

O Love, Love, Love! O withering might!
O sun, that from thy noonday height
Shudderest when I strain my sight,
Throbbing through all thy heat and light,
Lo, falling from my constant mind,
Lo, parched and withered, deaf and blind
I whirl like leaves in roaring wind.

II.

Last night I wasted hateful hours
Below the city's eastern towers:

I thirsted for the brooks, the showers:
I rolled among the tender flowers:
I crushed them on my breast, my mouth:
I looked athwart the burning drouth
Of that long desert to the south.

III.

Last night, when some one spoke his name,
From my swift blood that went and came
A thousand little shafts of flame
Were shivered in my narrow frame.
O Love, O fire! once he drew
With one long kiss my whole soul through
My lips, as sunlight drinketh dew.

IV.

Before he mounts the hill, I know
He cometh quickly: from below
Sweet gales, as from deep gardens, blow
Before him, striking on my brow.
In my dry brain my spirit soon,
Down-deepening from swoon to swoon,
Faints like a dazzled morning moon.

V.

The wind sounds like a silver wire,
And from beyond the noon a fire
Is poured upon the hills, and nigher
The skies stoop down in their desire;
And, isled in sudden seas of light,
My heart, pierced through with fierce delight,
Bursts into blossom in his sight.

VI.

My whole soul waiting silently,
All naked in a sultry sky,
Droops blinded with his shining eye:
I *will* possess him or will die.
I will grow round him in his place,

Grow, live, die looking on his face,
Die, dying clasped in his embrace.

ŒNONE.

THERE lies a vale in Ida, lovelier
Than all the valleys of Ionian hills.
The swimming vapor slopes athwart the glen,
Puts forth an arm, and creeps from pine to pine,
And loiters, slowly drawn. On either hand
The lawns and meadow ledges midway down
Hang rich in flowers, and far below them roars
The long brook falling through the cloven ravine
In cataract after cataract to the sea.
Behind the valley topmost Gargarus
Stands up and takes the morning; but in front
The gorges, opening wide apart, reveal
Troas and Ilion's columned citadel,
The crown of Troas.

Hither came at noon
Mournful Œnone, wandering forlorn
Of Paris, once her playmate on the hills.
Her cheek had lost the rose, and round her neck
Floated her hair or seemed to float in rest.
She, leaning on a fragment twined with vine,
Sang to the stillness, till the mountain-shade
Sloped downward to her seat from the upper cliff.

"O mother Ida, many-fountained Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
For now the noonday quiet holds the hill:
The grasshopper is silent in the grass:
The lizard, with his shadow on the stone,
Rests like a shadow, and the cicala sleeps.
The purple flowers droop: the golden bee
Is lily-cradled: I alone awake.

My eyes are full of tears, my heart of love,
My heart is breaking, and my eyes are dim,
And I am all aweary of my life.

"O mother Ida, many-fountained Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Hear me O Earth, hear me O Hills, O Caves,
That house the cold crowned snake! O mountain brooks,
I am the daughter of a River-God;
Hear me, for I will speak, and build up all
My sorrow with my song, as yonder walls
Rose slowly to a music slowly breathed,
A cloud that gathered shape: for it may be
That, while I speak of it, a little while
My heart may wander from its deeper woe.

"O mother Ida, many-fountained Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
I waited underneath the dawning hills,
Aloft the mountain lawn was dewy-dark,
And dewy-dark aloft the mountain-pine:
Beautiful Paris, evil-hearted Paris,
Leading a jet-black goat white-horned, white-hooved,
Came up from reedy Simois all alone.

"O mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Far-off the torrent called me from the cleft:
Far up the solitary morning smote
The streaks of virgin snow. With down-dropt eyes
I sat alone: white breasted like a star
Fronting the dawn he moved; a leopard skin
Drooped from his shoulder, but his sunny hair
Clustered about his temples like a God's;
And his cheek brightened as the foam-bow brightens
When the wind blows the foam, and all my heart
Went forth to embrace him coming ere he came.

"Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
He smiled, and opening out his milk-white palm

Disclosed a fruit of pure Hesperian gold,
That smelt ambrosially, and while I looked
And listened, the full-flowing river of speech
Came down upon my heart.

"'My own Œnone,
Beautiful-browed Œnone, my own soul,
Behold this fruit, whose gleaming rind engraven
"For the most fair," would seem to award it thine,
As lovelier than whatever Oread haunt
The knolls of Ida, loveliest in all grace
Of movement, and the charm of married brows.'

"Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
He prest the blossom of his lips to mine,
And added, 'This was cast upon the board,
When all the full-faced presence of the Gods
Ranged in the halls of Peleus; whereupon
Rose feud, with question unto whom 'twere due:
But light-foot Iris brought it yester-eve,
Delivering that to me, by common voice
Elected umpire, Herè comes to-day
Pallas and Aphrodite, claiming each
This meed of fairest. Thou, within the cave
Behind yon whispering tuft of oldest pine,
Mayst well behold them unbeheld, unheard
Hear all, and see thy Paris judge of Gods.'

"Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
It was the deep midnoon: one silvery cloud
Had lost his way between the piney sides
Of this long glen. Then to the bower they came.
Naked they came to that smooth-swarded bower,
And at their feet the crocus brake like fire,
Violet, amaracus, and asphodel,
Lotos and lilies: and a wind arose,
And overhead the wandering ivy and vine,
This way and that, in many a wild festoon

Ran riot, garlanding the gnarled boughs
With bunch and berry and flower through and through.

"O mother Ida, harken ere I die.
On the tree-tops a crested peacock lit,
And o'er him flowed a golden cloud, and leaned
Upon him, slowly dropping fragrant dew.
Then first I heard the voice of her, to whom
Coming through Heaven, like a light that grows
Larger and clearer, with one mind the Gods
Rise up for reverence. She to Paris made
Proffer of royal power, ample rule
Unquestioned, overflowing revenue
Wherewith to embellish state, 'from many a vale
And river-sundered champaign clothed with corn,
Or labored mines, undrainable of ore.
Honor,' she said, 'and homage, tax and toll,
From many an inland town and haven large,
Mast-thronged beneath her shadowing citadel
In glassy bays among her tallest towers.'

"O mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Still she spake on, and still she spake of power,
'Which in all action is the end of all;
Power fitted to the season; wisdom-bred
And throned of wisdom—from all neighbor crowns
Alliance and allegiance, till thy hand
Fail from the sceptre-staff. Such boon from me,
From me, Heaven's Queen, Paris, to thee king-born
A shepherd all thy life, but yet king-born,
Should come most welcome, seeing men, in power
Only, are likest Gods, who have attained
Rest in a happy place and quiet seats
Above the thunder, with undying bliss,
In knowledge of their own supremacy.'

"Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
She ceased, and Paris held the costly fruit

Out at arm's-length, so much the thought of power
Flattered his spirit; but Pallas where she stood
Somewhat apart, her clear and bared limbs
O'erthwarted with the brazen-headed spear
Upon her pearly shoulder leaning cold,
The while, above, her full and earnest eye
Over her snow-cold breast and angry cheek
Kept watch, waiting decision, made reply.

"'Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,
These three alone lead life to sovereign power.
Yet not for power, (power of herself
Would come uncalled for,) but to live by law,
Acting the law we live by without fear;
And because right is right, to follow right
Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence.'

"Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Again she said: 'I woo thee not with gifts.
Sequel of guerdon could not alter me
To fairer. Judge thou me by what I am,
So shalt thou find me fairest.

Yet, indeed,
If gazing on divinity disrobed,
Thy mortal eyes are frail to judge of fair,
Unbiased by self-profit, oh! rest thee sure
That I shall love thee well and cleave to thee,
So that my vigor, wedded to thy blood,
Shall strike within thy pulses, like a God's,
To push thee forward through a life of shocks,
Dangers and deeds, until endurance grow
Sinewed with action, and the full-grown will,
Circled through all experiences, pure law,
Commeasure perfect freedom.'

"Here she ceased,
And Paris pondered, and I cried, 'O Paris,
Give it to Pallas!' but he heard me not,
Or hearing would not hear me, woe is me!

" O mother Ida, many-fountained Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Idalian Aphrodite beautiful,
Fresh as the foam, new-bathed in Paphian wells,
With rosy slender fingers backward drew
From her warm brows and bosom her deep hair
Ambrosial, golden round her lucid throat
And shoulder: from the violets her light foot
Shone rosy-white, and o'er her rounded form
Between the shadows of the vine bunches
Floated the glowing sunlights, as she moved.

" Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
She with a subtle smile in her mild eyes,
The herald of her triumph, drawing nigh,
Half-whispered in his ear, 'I promise thee
The fairest and most loving wife in Greece.'
She spoke and laughed: I shut my sight for fear:
But when I looked, Paris had raised his arm,
And I beheld great Here's angry eyes,
As she withdrew into the golden cloud,
And I was left alone within the bower;
And from that time to this I am alone,
And I shall be alone until I die.

" Yet, mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Fairest—why fairest wife? am I not fair?
My love hath told me so a thousand times.
Methinks I must be fair, for yesterday,
When I past by, a wild and wanton pard,
Eyed like the evening star, with playful tail,
Crouched fawning in the weed. Most loving is she?
Ah me, my mountain shepherd, that my arms
Were wound about thee, and my hot lips prest
Close, close to thine in that quick-falling dew
Of fruitful kisses, thick as Autumn rains
Flash in the pools of whirling Simois.

" O mother, hear me yet before I die.
They came, they cut away my tallest pines,

My dark tall pines, that plumed the craggy ledge
High over the blue gorge, and all between
The snowy peak and snow-white cataract
Fostered the callow eaglet—from beneath
Whose thick mysterious boughs in the dark morn
The panther's roar came muffled, while I sat
Low in the valley. Never, never more
Shall lone Œnone see the morning mist
Sweep through them; never see them overlaid
With narrow moonlit slips of silver cloud,
Between the loud stream and the trembling stars.

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.
I wish that somewhere in the ruined folds,
Among the fragments tumbled from the glens,
Or the dry thickets, I could meet with her,
The Abominable, that uninvited came
Into the fair Peleïan banquet-hall,
And cast the golden fruit upon the board,
And bred this change; that I might speak my mind,
And tell her to her face how much I hate
Her presence, hated both of Gods and men.

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.
Hath he not sworn his love a thousand times,
In this green valley, under this green hill,
Even on this hand, and sitting on this stone?
Sealed it with kisses? watered it with tears?
O happy tears, and how unlike to these!
O happy Heaven! how canst thou see my face?
O happy earth, how canst thou bear my weight?
O death, death, death, thou ever-floating cloud,
There are enough unhappy on this earth;
Pass by the happy souls, that love to live:
I pray thee pass before my light of life,
And shadow all my soul, that I may die.
Thou weighest heavy on the heart within,
Weigh heavy on my eyelids: let me die.

" O mother, hear me yet before I die.
I will not die alone, for fiery thoughts
Do shape themselves within me more and more,
Whereof I catch the issue, as I hear
Dead sounds at night come from the inmost hills,
Like footsteps upon wool. I dimly see
My far-off doubtful purpose, as a mother
Conjectures of the features of her child
Ere it is born: her child!—a shudder comes
Across me: never child be born of me,
Unblest, to vex me with his father's eyes!

" O mother, hear me yet before I die.
Hear me, O earth. I will not die alone,
Lest their shrill happy laughter come to me
Walking the cold and starless road of Death
Uncomforted, leaving my ancient love
With the Greek woman. I will rise and go
Down into Troy, and ere the stars come forth
Talk with the wild Cassandra, for she says
A fire dances before her, and a sound
Rings ever in her ears of armed men.
What this may be I know not, but I know
That, wheresoe'er I am by night and day,
All earth and air seem only burning fire."

THE SISTERS.

I.

We were two daughters of one race:
She was the fairest in the face:
The wind is blowing in turret and tree.
They were together, and she fell;
Therefore revenge became me well.
O the Earl was fair to see!

II.

She died: she went to burning flame:
She mixed her ancient blood with shame.
The wind is howling in turret and tree.
Whole weeks and months, and early and late,
To win his love I lay in wait.
O the Earl was fair to see!

III.

I made a feast; I bade him come:
I won his love, I brought him home.
The wind is roaring in turret and tree.
And after supper, on a bed,
Upon my lap he laid his head:
O the Earl was fair to see!

IV.

I kissed his eyelids into rest:
His ruddy cheek upon my breast.
The wind is raging in turret and tree.
I hated him with the hate of hell,
But I loved his beauty passing well.
O the Earl was fair to see!

V.

I rose up in the silent night:
I made my dagger sharp and bright.
The wind is raving in turret and tree.
As half-asleep his breath he drew,
Three times I stabbed him through and through.
O the Earl was fair to see!

VI.

I curled and combed his comely head.
He looked so grand when he was dead.
The wind is blowing in turret and tree.
I wrapt his body in the sheet,
And laid him at his mother's feet.
O the Earl was fair to see!

TO ——

WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM.

I SEND you here a sort of allegory,
(For you will understand it,) of a soul,
A sinful soul possessed of many gifts,
A spacious garden full of flowering weeds,
A glorious Devil, large in heart and brain,
That did love Beauty only, (Beauty seen
In all varieties of mould and mind.)
And Knowledge for its beauty; or if Good,
Good only for its beauty, seeing not
That Beauty, Good, and Knowledge, are three sister
That dote upon each other, friends to man,
Living together under the same roof,
And never can be sundered without tears.
And he that shuts Love out, in turn shall be
Shut out from Love, and on her threshold lie
Howling in outer darkness. Not for this
Was common clay ta'en from the common earth,
Moulded by God, and tempered with the tears
Of angels to the perfect shape of man.

THE PALACE OF ART.

I BUILT my soul a lordly pleasure-house,
Wherein at ease for aye to dwell.
I said, "O Soul, make merry and carouse,
Dear soul, for all is well."

A huge crag-platform, smooth as burnished brass,
I chose. The ranged ramparts bright
From level meadow-bases of deep grass
Suddenly scaled the light.

Thereon I built it firm. Of ledge or shelf
The rock rose clear, or winding stair.
My soul would live alone unto herself
In her high palace there.

And "while the world runs round and round," I said,
"Reign thou apart, a quiet king,
Still as, while Saturn whirls, his steadfast shade
Sleeps on his luminous ring."

To which my soul made answer readily:
"Trust me, in bliss I shall abide
In this great mansion, that is built for me,
So royal-rich and wide."

* * * *
* * * *

Four courts I made, East, West, and South and North,
In each a squared lawn, wherefrom
The golden gorge of dragons spouted forth
A flood of fountain-foam.

And round the cool green courts there ran a row
Of cloisters, branched like mighty woods,
Echoing all night to that sonorous flow
Of spouted fountain-floods.

And round the roofs a gilded gallery
That lent broad verge to distant lands,
Far as the wild swan wings, to where the sky
Dipt down to sea and sands.

From those four jets four currents in one swell
Across the mountain streamed below
In misty folds, that floating as they fell
Lit up a torrent-blow.

And high on every peak a statue seemed
To hang on tiptoe, tossing up

A cloud of incense of all odor steamed
From out a golden cup.

So that she thought, "And who shall gaze upon
My palace with unblinded eyes,
While this great bow will waver in the sun,
And that sweet incense rise?"

For that sweet incense rose and never failed,
And, while day sank or mounted higher,
The light aërial gallery, golden-railed,
Burnt like a fringe of fire.

Likewise the deep-set windows, stained and traced,
Would seem slow-flaming crimson fires
From shadowed grots of arches interlaced,
And tipt with frost-like spires.

* * * *
* * * *

Full of long-sounding corridors it was,
That over-vaulted grateful gloom,
Through which the livelong day my soul did pass,
Well-pleased, from room to room.

Full of great rooms and small the palace stood,
All various, each a perfect whole
From living Nature, fit for every mood
And change of my still soul.

For some were hung with arras green and blue,
Showing a gaudy summer-morn,
Where with puffed cheek the belted hunter blew
His wreathed bugle-horn.

One seemed all dark and red—a tract of sand,
And some one pacing there alone,
Who paced forever in a glimmering land,
Lit with a low large moon.

One showed an iron coast and angry waves.
You seemed to hear them climb and fall
And roar rock-thwarted under bellowing caves,
Beneath the windy wall.

And one, a full-fed river winding slow
By herds upon an endless plain,
The ragged rims of thunder brooding low,
With shadow-streaks of rain.

And one, the reapers at their sultry toil.
In front they bound the sheaves. Behind
Were realms of upland, prodigal in oil,
And hoary to the wind.

And one, a foreground black with stones and slags,
Beyond a line of heights, and higher
All barred with long white cloud the scornful crags,
And highest, snow and fire.

And one, an English home—gray twilight poured
On dewy pastures, dewy trees,
Softer than sleep—all things in order stored,
A haunt of ancient Peace.

Nor these alone, but every landscape fair,
As fit for every mood of mind,
Or gay, or grave, or sweet, or stern, was there,
Not less than truth designed.

* * * *
* * * *

Or the maid-mother by a crucifix,
In tracts of pasture sunny-warm,
Beneath branch-work of costly sardonyx
Sat smiling, babe in arm.

Or in a clear-walled city on the sea,
Near gilded organ-pipes, her hair
Wound with white roses, slept St. Cecily;
An angel looked at her.

Or thronging all one porch of Paradise,
A group of Houris bowed to see
The dying Islamite, with hands and eyes
That said, we wait for thee.

Or mythic Uther's deeply-wounded son
In some fair space of sloping greens
Lay, dozing in the vale of Avalon,
And watched by weeping queens.

Or hollowing one hand against his ear,
To list a footfall, ere he saw
The wood-nymph, stayed the Ausonian king to hear
Of wisdom and of law.

Or over hills with peaky tops engrailed,
And many a tract of palm and rice,
The throne of Indian Cama slowly sailed
A summer fanned with spice.

Or sweet Europa's mantle blew unclasped
From off her shoulder backward borne:
From one hand drooped a crocus: one hand grasped
The mild bull's golden horn.

Or else flushed Ganymede, his rosy thigh
Half-buried in the Eagle's down,
Sole as a flying star shot through the sky
Above the pillared town.

Nor these alone: but every legend fair
Which the supreme Caucasian mind
Carved out of Nature for itself, was there,
Not less than life, designed.

* * * *
* * * *

Then in the towers I placed great bells that swung
Moved of themselves, with silver sound;
And with choice paintings of wise men I hung
The royal dais round.

For there was Milton like a seraph strong,
Beside him Shakspeare bland and mild;
And there the world-worn Dante grasped his song,
And somewhat grimly smiled.

And there the Ionian father of the rest;
A million wrinkles carved his skin;
A hundred winters snowed upon his breast,
From cheek and throat and chin.

Above, the fair hall-ceiling stately-set
Many an arch high up did lift,
And angels rising and descending met
With interchange of gift.

Below was all mosaic choicely planned
With cycles of the human tale
Of this wide world, the times of every land
So wrought, they will not fail.

The people here, a beast of burden slow,
Toiled onward, pricked with goads and stings;
Here played, a tiger, rolling to and fro
The heads and crowns of kings;

Here rose, an athlete, strong to break or bind
All force in bonds that might endure,
And here once more like some sick man declined,
And trusted any cure.

But over these she trod: and those great bells
Began to chime. She took her throne:
She sat betwixt the shining Oriels,
To sing her songs alone.

And through the topmost Oriels' colored flame
Two godlike faces gazed below:
Plato the wise, and large-browed Verulam,
The first of those who know.

And all those names, that in their motion were
Full-welling fountain-heads of change,
Betwixt the slender shafts were blazoned fair
In diverse raiment strange:

Through which the lights, rose, amber, emerald, blue,
Flushed in her temples and her eyes,
And from her lips, as morn from Memnon, drew
Rivers of melodies.

No nightingale delighteth to prolong
Her low preamble all alone,
More than my soul to hear her echoed song
Throb through the ribbed stone;

Singing and murmuring in her feastful mirth,
Joying to feel herself alive,
Lord over Nature, Lord of the visible earth,
Lord of the senses five;

Communing with herself: "All these are mine,
And let the world have peace or wars,
'Tis one to me." She—when young night divine
Crowned dying day with stars,

Making sweet close of his delicious toils—
Lit light in wreaths and anadems,
And pure quintessences of precious oils
In hollowed moons of gems,

To mimic heaven; and clapt her hands and cried,
"I marvel if my still delight
In this great house so royal-rich, and wide,
Be flattered to the height.

"O all things fair to sate my various eyes!
O shapes and hues that please me well!
O silent faces of the Great and Wise,
My Gods, with whom I dwell!

"O God-like isolation which art mine,
I can but count thee perfect gain,
What time I watch the darkening droves of swine
That range on yonder plain.

"In filthy sloughs they roll a prurient skin,
They graze and wallow, breed and sleep;
And oft some brainless devil enters in,
And drives them to the deep."

Then of the moral instinct would she prate,
And of the rising from the dead,
As hers by right of full-accomplished Fate;
And at the last she said:

"I take possession of man's mind and deed.
I care not what the sects may brawl.
I sit as God, holding no form of creed,
But contemplating all."

* * * *
* * * *

Full oft the riddle of the painful earth
Flashed through her as she sat alone,
Yet not the less held she her solemn mirth,
And intellectual throne.

And so she throve and prospered: so three years
She prospered: on the fourth she fell,
Like Herod, when the shout was in his ears,
Struck through with pangs of hell.

Lest she should fail and perish utterly,
God, before whom ever lie bare
The abysmal deeps of Personality,
Plagued her with sore despair.

When she would think, where'er she turned her sight,
The airy hand confusion wrought,
Wrote "Mene, mene," and divided quite
The kingdom of her thought.

Deep dread and loathing of her solitude
Fell on her, from which mood was born
Scorn of herself; again, from out that mood
Laughter at her self-scorn.

"What! is not this my place of strength," she said,
"My spacious mansion built for me,
Whereof the strong foundation-stones were laid
Since my first memory?"

But in dark corners of her palace stood
Uncertain shapes; and unawares
On white-eyed phantasms weeping tears of blood,
And horrible nightmares,

And hollow shades enclosing hearts of flame,
And, with dim fretted foreheads all,
On corpses three-months-old at noon she came,
That stood against the wall.

A spot of dull stagnation, without light
Or power of movement, seemed my soul,
'Mid onward-sloping motions infinite
Making for one sure goal.

A still salt pool, locked in with bars of sand;
Left on the shore; that hears all night
The plunging seas draw backward from the land
Their moon-led waters white.

A star that with the choral starry dance
Joined not, but stood, and standing saw
The hollow orb of moving Circumstance
Rolled round by one fixed law.

Back on herself her serpent pride had curled.
"No voice," she shrieked in that lone hall,
"No voice breaks through the stillness of this world:
One deep, deep silence all!"

She, mouldering with the dull earth's mouldering sod,
Inwrapt tenfold in slothful shame,
Lay there exiled from eternal God,
Lost to her place and name;

And death and life she hated equally,
And nothing saw, for her despair,
But dreadful time, dreadful eternity,
No comfort anywhere;

Remaining utterly confused with fears,
And ever worse with growing time,
And ever unrelieved by dismal tears,
And all alone in crime:

Shut up as in a crumbling tomb, girt round
With blackness as a solid wall,
Far off she seemed to hear the dully sound
Of human footsteps fall.

As in strange lands a traveller walking slow,
In doubt and great perplexity,
A little before moon-rise hears the low
Moan of an unknown sea;

And knows not if it be thunder or a sound
Of rocks thrown down, or one deep cry
Of great wild beasts; then thinketh, "I have found
A new land, but I die."

She howled aloud, "I am on fire within.
There comes no murmur of reply.
What is it that will take away my sin,
And save me lest I die?"

So when four years were wholly finished,
She threw her royal robes away.
"Make me a cottage in the vale," she said,
"Where I may mourn and pray.

" Yet pull not down my palace towers, that are
So lightly, beautifully built:
Perchance I may return with others there
When I have purged my guilt."

LADY CLARA VERE DE VERE.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
Of me you shall not win renown;
You thought to break a country heart
For pastime, ere you went to town.
At me you smiled, but unbeguiled
I saw the snare, and I retired:
The daughter of a hundred Earls,
You are not one to be desired.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
I know you proud to bear your name;
Your pride is yet no mate for mine,
Too proud to care from whence I came.
Nor would I break for your sweet sake
A heart that dotes on truer charms.
A simple maiden in her flower
Is worth a hundred coats-of-arms.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
Some meeker pupil you must find,
For were you queen of all that is,
I could not stoop to such a mind.
You sought to prove how I could love,
And my disdain is my reply.
The lion on your old stone gates
Is not more cold to you than I.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
You put strange memories in my head

Not thrice your branching limes have blown
Since I beheld young Laurence dead.
O your sweet eyes, your low replies:
A great enchantress you may be;
But there was that across his throat
Which you had hardly cared to see.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
When thus he met his mother's view,
She had the passions of her kind,
She spake some certain truths of you.
Indeed, I heard one bitter word
That scarce is fit for you to hear;
Her manners had not that repose
Which stamps the caste of Vere de Vere.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
There stands a spectre in your hall:
The guilt of blood is at your door:
You changed a wholesome heart to gall.
You held your course without remorse,
To make him trust his modest worth,
And, last, you fixed a vacant stare,
And slew him with your noble birth.

Trust me, Clara Vere de Vere,
From yon blue heavens above us bent
The grand old gardener and his wife
Smile at the claims of long descent.
Howe'er it be, it seems to me,
'Tis only noble to be good.
Kind hearts are more than coronets,
And simple faith than Norman blood.

I know you, Clara Vere de Vere:
You pine among your halls and towers,
The languid light of your proud eyes
Is wearied of the rolling hours.
In glowing health, with boundless wealth,

But sickening of a vague disease,
You know so ill to deal with time,
You needs must play such pranks as these.

Clara, Clara Vere de Vere,
If Time be heavy on your hands,
Are there no beggars at your gate,
Nor any poor about your lands?
O! teach the orphan-boy to read,
Or teach the orphan-girl to sew,
Pray Heaven for a human heart,
And let the foolish yeoman go.

THE MAY QUEEN.

I.

You must wake and call me early, call me early, mother dear;
To-morrow 'ill be the happiest time of all the glad New-year;
Of all the glad New-year, mother, the maddest, merriest day;
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

II.

There's many a black, black eye, they say, but none so bright as mine;
There's Margaret and Mary, there's Kate and Caroline:
But none so fair as little Alice in all the land, they say:
So I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

III.

I sleep so sound all night, mother, that I shall never wake,
If you do not call me loud when the day begins to break:
But I must gather knots of flowers, and buds and garlands gay,
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

IV.

As I came up the valley, whom think ye should I see,
But Robin leaning on the bridge beneath the hazel-tree?
He thought of that sharp look, mother, I gave him yesterday,—
But I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

V.

He thought I was a ghost, mother, for I was all in white,
And I ran by him without speaking, like a flash of light.
They call me cruel-hearted, but I care not what they say,
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

VI.

They say he's dying all for love, but that can never be:
They say his heart is breaking, mother—what is that to me?
There's many a bolder lad 'ill woo me any summer day,
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

VII.

Little Effie shall go with me to-morrow to the green,
And you'll be there, too, mother, to see me made the Queen:
For the shepherd lads on every side 'ill come from far away,
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

VIII.

The honeysuckle round the porch has woven its wavy bowers,
And by the meadow-trenches blow the faint sweet cuckoo-flowers;
And the wild marsh-marigold shines like fire in swamps and hollows gray,
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

IX.

The night-winds come and go, mother, upon the meadow grass,
And the happy stars above them seem to brighten as they pass;
There will not be a drop of rain the whole of the livelong day,
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother I'm to be Queen o' the May.

X.

All the valley, mother, 'ill be fresh and green and still,
And the cowslip and the crowfoot are over all the hill,
And the rivulet in the flowery dale 'ill merrily glance and play,
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

XI.

So you must wake and call me early, call me early, mother dear,
To-morrow 'ill be the happiest time of all the glad New-year:
To-morrow 'ill be of all the year the maddest, merriest day,
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

NEW YEAR'S EVE.

I.

If you're waking call me early, call me early, mother dear,
For I would see the sun rise upon the glad New-year.
It is the last New-year that I shall ever see,
Then you may lay me low i' the mould, and think no more of me.

II.

To-night I saw the sun set: he set and left behind
The good old year, the dear old time, and all my peace of mind;
And the New-year's coming up, mother, but I shall never see
The blossom on the blackthorn, the leaf upon the tree.

III.

Last May we made a crown of flowers: we had a merry day;
Beneath the hawthorn on the green they made me Queen of May;

And we danced about the May-pole and in the hazel copse,
Till Charles's Wain came out above the tall white chimney-tops.

IV.

There 's not a flower on all the hills: the frost is on the pane:
I only wish to live till the snowdrops come again:
I wish the snow would melt and the sun come out on high:
I long to see a flower so before the day I die.

V.

The building rook 'ill caw from the windy tall elm-tree,
And the tufted plover pipe along the fallow lea,
And the swallow 'ill come back again with summer o'er the wave,
But I shall lie alone, mother, within the moulder-ing grave.

VI.

Upon the chancel-casement, and upon that grave of mine,
In the early early morning the summer sun 'ill shine,
Before the red cock crows from the farm upon the hill,
When you are warm-asleep, mother, and all the world is still.

VII.

When the flowers come again, mother, beneath the waning light
You'll never see me more in the long gray fields at night;
When from the dry dark wold the summer airs blow cool
On the oat-grass and the sword-grass, and the bul-rush in the pool.

VIII.

You'll bury me, my mother, just beneath the hawthorn shade,
And you'll come sometimes and see me where I am lowly laid.
I shall not forget you, mother, I shall hear you when you pass,
With your feet above my head in the long and pleasant grass.

IX.

I have been wild and wayward, but you'll forgive me now;
You'll kiss me, my own mother, and forgive me ere I go:
Nay, nay, you must not weep, nor let your grief be wild,
You should not fret for me, mother, you have another child.

X.

If I can I'll come again, mother, from out my resting-place;
Though you'll not see me, mother, I shall look upon your face;
Though I cannot speak a word, I shall harken what you say,
And be often, often with you when you think I'm far away.

XI.

Good-night, good-night, when I have said good-night forevermore,
And you see me carried out from the threshold of the door;
Don't let Effie come to see me till my grave be growing green:
She'll be a better child to you than ever I have been.

XII.

She'll find my garden-tools upon the granary floor:
Let her take 'em: they are hers: I shall never
garden more:
But tell her, when I'm gone, to train the rose-bush
that I set
About the parlor-window and the box of mignonette.

XIII.

Good-night, sweet mother: call me before the day
is born.
All night I lie awake, but I fall asleep at morn;
But I would see the sun rise upon the glad New-
year,
So, if you're waking, call me, call me early, mother
dear.

CONCLUSION.

I.

I THOUGHT to pass away before, and yet alive I
am;
And in the fields all round I hear the bleating of
the lamb.
How sadly, I remember, rose the morning of the
year!
To die before the snowdrop came, and now the
violet's here.

II.

O sweet is the new violet, that comes beneath the
skies,
And sweeter is the young lamb's voice to me that
cannot rise,

And sweet is all the land about, and all the flowers that blow,
And sweeter far is death than life to me that long to go.

III.

It seemed so hard at first, mother, to leave the blessed sun,
And now it seems as hard to stay; and yet, His will be done!
But still I think it can't be long before I find release;
And that good man, the clergyman, has told me words of peace.

IV.

O blessings on his kindly voice and on his silver hair!
And blessings on his whole life long, until he meet me there!
O blessings on his kindly heart and on his silver head!
A thousand times I blest him, as he knelt beside my bed.

V.

He taught me all the mercy, for he showed me all the sin.
Now, though my lamp was lighted late, there's One will let me in:
Nor would I now be well, mother, again, if that could be,
For my desire is but to pass to Him that died for me.

VI.

I did not hear the dog howl, mother, or the death-watch beat,
There came a sweeter token when the night and morning meet:

But sit beside my bed, mother, and put your hand in mine,
And Effie on the other side, and I will tell the sign

VII.

All in the wild March-morning I heard the angels call;
It was when the moon was setting, and the dark was over all;
The trees began to whisper, and the wind began to roll,
And in the wild March-morning I heard them call my soul.

VIII.

For lying broad awake I thought of you and Effie dear;
I saw you sitting in the house, and I no longer here;
With all my strength I prayed for both, and so I felt resigned,
And up the valley came a swell of music on the wind.

IX.

I thought that it was fancy, and I listened in my bed,
And then did something speak to me—I know not what was said;
For great delight and shuddering took hold of all my mind,
And up the valley came again the music on the wind.

X.

But you were sleeping; and I said, "It's not for them; it's mine."
And if it comes three times, I thought, I take it for a sign.

And once again it came, and close beside the window-bars,
Then seemed to go right up to heaven and die among the stars.

XI.

So now I think my time is near. I trust it is. I know
The blessed music went that way my soul will have to go.
And for myself, indeed, I care not if I go to-day,
But, Effie, you must comfort *her* when I am past away.

XII.

And say to Robin a kind word, and tell him not to fret;
There's many worthier than I would make him happy yet.
If I had lived—I cannot tell—I might have been his wife;
But all these things have ceased to be, with my desire of life.

XIII.

O look! the sun begins to rise, the heavens are in a glow;
He shines upon a hundred fields, and all of them I know.
And there I move no longer now, and there his light may shine—
Wild flowers in the valley for other hands than mine.

XIV.

O sweet and strange it seems to me, that ere this day is done
The voice that now is speaking may be beyond the sun—

Forever and forever with those just souls and true—
And what is life, that we should moan? why make
we such ado?

XV.

Forever and forever, all in a blessed home—
And there to wait a little while till you and Effie
come—
To lie within the light of God, as I lie upon your
breast—
And the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary
are at rest.

THE LOTOS-EATERS.

I.

"COURAGE!" he said, and pointed toward the
land;
"This mounting wave will roll us shoreward soon."
In the afternoon they came unto a land,
In which it seemed always afternoon.
All round the coast the languid air did swoon,
Breathing like one that hath a weary dream.
Full-faced above the valley stood the moon;
And like a downward smoke, the slender stream
Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem.

II.

A land of streams! some, like a downward smoke,
Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did go;
And some through wavering lights and shadows
broke
Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below.
They saw the gleaming river seaward flow
From the inner land: far-off, three mountain-tops,
Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,

Stood sunset-flushed: and, dewed with showery drops,
Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the woven copse.

III.

The charmed sunset lingered low adown
In the red West: through mountain clefts the dale
Was seen far inland, and the yellow down
Bordered with palm, and many a winding vale
And meadow, set with slender galingale;
A land where all things always seemed the same!
And round about the keel with faces pale,
Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,
The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters came.

IV.

Branches they bore of that enchanted stem,
Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they gave
To each, but whoso did receive of them,
And taste, to him the gushing of the wave
Far, far away did seem to mourn and rave
On alien shores; and if his fellow spake,
His voice was thin, as voices from the grave;
And deep-asleep he seemed, yet all awake,
And music in his ears his beating heart did make.

V.

They sat them down upon the yellow sand,
Between the sun and moon upon the shore;
And sweet it was to dream of Father-land,
Of child, and wife, and slave; but evermore
Most weary seemed the sea, weary the oar,
Weary the wandering fields of barren foam.
Then some one said, "We will return no more;"
And all at once they sang, "Our island home
Is far beyond the wave; we will no longer roam."

CHORIC SONG.

1.

There is sweet music here that softer falls
Than petals from blown roses on the grass,
Or night-dews on still waters between walls
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass;
Music that gentlier on the spirit lies
Than tired eyelids upon tired eyes;
Music that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful skies.
Here are cool mosses deep,
And through the moss the ivies creep,
And in the stream the long-leaved flowers weep,
And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in sleep.

2.

Why are we weighed upon with heaviness,
And utterly consumed with sharp distress,
While all things else have rest from weariness?
All things have rest: why should we toil alone,
We only toil, who are the first of things,
And make perpetual moan,
Still from one sorrow to another thrown:
Nor ever fold our wings,
And cease from wanderings,
Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy balm;
Nor hearken what the inner spirit sings,
"There is no joy but calm!"
Why should we only toil, the roof and crown of things?

3.

Lo! in the middle of the wood,
The folded leaf is wooed from out the bud
With winds upon the branch, and there
Grows green and broad, and takes no care

Sun-steeped at noon, and in the moon
Nightly dew-fed; and turning yellow
Falls, and floats adown the air.
Lo! sweetened with the summer light,
The full-juiced apple, waxing over-mellow,
Drops in a silent autumn night.
All its allotted length of days,
The flower ripens in its place,
Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no toil,
Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

4.

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,
Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea.
Death is the end of life; ah, why
Should life all labor be?
Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,
And in a little while our lips are dumb.
Let us alone. What is it that will last?
All things are taken from us, and become
Portions and parcels of the dreadful Past.
Let us alone. What pleasure can we have
To war with evil? Is there any peace
In ever climbing up the climbing wave?
All things have rest, and ripen toward the grave
In silence; ripen, fall and cease:
Give us long rest or death, dark death or dreamful ease!

5.

How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream,
With half-shut eyes ever to seem
Falling asleep in a half-dream!
To dream and dream, like yonder amber light,
Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on the height;
To hear each other's whispered speech;
Eating the Lotos, day by day,
To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,
And tender-curving lines of creamy spray:

To lend our hearts and spirits wholly
To the influence of mild-minded melancholy;
To muse and brood and live again in memory,
With those old faces of our infancy
Heaped over with a mound of grass,
Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn of brass!

6.

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,
And dear the last embraces of our wives
And their warm tears: but all hath suffered change,
For surely now our household hearths are cold:
Our sons inherit us: our looks are strange:
And we should come like ghosts to trouble joy.
Or else the island princes, over-bold
Have eat our substance, and the minstrel sings
Before them of the ten-years' war in Troy,
And our great deeds, as half-forgotten things.
Is there confusion in the little isle?
Let what is broken so remain.
The Gods are hard to reconcile:
'Tis hard to settle order once again.
There *is* confusion worse than death,
Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,
Long labor unto aged breath,
Sore task to hearts worn out with many wars,
And eyes grown dim with gazing on the pilot-stars

7.

But, propt on beds of amaranth and moly,
How sweet (while warm airs lull us, blowing lowly,)
With half-dropt eyelids still,
Beneath a heaven dark and holy,
To watch the long bright river drawing slowly
His waters from the purple hill—
To hear the dewy echoes calling
From cave to cave through the thick-twined vine—
To watch the emerald-colored water falling

Through many a woven acanthus-wreath divine!
Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling brine,
Only to hear were sweet, stretched out beneath the pine.

8.

The Lotos blooms below the barren peak:
The Lotos blows by every winding creek:
All day the wind breathes low with mellower tone:
Through every hollow cave and alley lone
Round and round the spicy downs the yellow Lotos-dust is blown.
We have had enough of action, and of motion we,
Rolled to starboard, rolled to larboard, when the surge was seething free,
Where the wallowing monster spouted his foam-fountains in the sea.
Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal mind,
In the hollow Lotos-land to live and lie reclined
On the hills like Gods together, careless of mankind.
For they lie beside their nectar, and the bolts are hurled
Far below them in the valleys, and the clouds are lightly curled
Round their golden houses, girdled with the gleaming world;
Where they smile in secret, looking over wasted lands,
Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring deeps and fiery sands,
Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking ships, and praying hands.
But they smile, they find a music centred in a doleful song
Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient tale of wrong,
Like a tale of little meaning, though the words are strong;

Chanted from an ill-used race of men that cleave
the soil,
Sow the seed, and reap the harvest with enduring
toil,
Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and wine and
oil;
Till they perish and they suffer—some, 'tis whis-
pered—down in hell
Suffer endless anguish, others in Elysian valleys
dwell,
Resting weary limbs at last on beds of asphodel.
Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil, the
shore
Than labor in the deep mid-ocean, wind and wave
and oar;
O rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wander
more.

A DREAM OF FAIR WOMEN.

I.

I READ, before my eyelids dropt their shade,
"*The Legend of Good Women*," long ago
Sung by the morning star of song, who made
His music heard below;

II.

Dan Chaucer, the first warbler, whose sweet breath
Preluded those melodious bursts, that fill
The spacious times of great Elizabeth
With sounds that echo still.

III.

And, for a while, the knowledge of his art
Held me above the subject, as strong gales
Hold swollen clouds from raining, though my heart,
Brimful of those wild tales,

IV.

Charged both mine eyes with tears. In every land
I saw, wherever light illumineth,
Beauty and anguish walking hand in hand
The downward slope to death.

V.

Those far-renowned brides of ancient song
Peopled the hollow dark, like burning stars,
And I heard sounds of insult, shame, and wrong,
And trumpets blown for wars;

VI.

And clattering flints battered with clanging hoofs:
And I saw crowds in columned sanctuaries;
And forms that passed at windows and on roofs
Of marble palaces;

VII.

Corpses across the threshold; heroes tall
Dislodging pinnacle and parapet
Upon the tortoise creeping to the wall;
Lancers in ambush set;

VIII.

And high shrine-doors burst through with heated blasts
That run before the fluttering tongues of fire;
White surf wind-scattered over sails and masts,
And ever climbing higher;

IX.

Squadrons and squares of men in brazen plates,
Scaffolds, still sheets of water, divers woes,
Ranges of glimmering vaults with iron grates,
And hushed seraglios.

X.

So shape chased shape as swift as, when to land
Bluster the winds and tides the self-same way,
Crisp foam-flakes scud along the level sand,
Torn from the fringe of spray.

XI.

I started once, or seemed to start, in pain,
Resolved on noble things, and strove to speak,
As when a great thought strikes along the brain,
And flushes all the cheek.

XII.

And once my arm was lifted to hew down
A cavalier from off his saddle-bow,
That bore a lady from a leaguered town;
And then, I know not how,

XIII.

All those sharp fancies, by down-lapsing thought
Streamed onward, lost their edges, and did creep
Rolled on each other, rounded, smoothed, and brought
Into the gulfs of sleep.

XIV.

At last methought that I had wandered far
In an old wood: fresh-washed in coolest dew,
The maiden splendors of the morning star
Shook in the steadfast blue.

XV.

Enormous elm-tree boles did stoop and lean
Upon the dusky brushwood underneath
Their broad curved branches, fledged with clearest green,
New from its silken sheath.

XVI.

The dim red morn had died, her journey done,
And with dead lips smiled at the twilight plain,
Half-fallen across the threshold of the sun,
Never to rise again.

XVII.

There was no motion in the dumb dead air,
Not any song of bird or sound of rill;
Gross darkness of the inner sepulchre
Is not so deadly still

XVIII.

As that wide forest. Growths of jasmine turned
Their humid arms festooning tree to tree,
And at the root through lush green grasses burned
The red anemone.

XIX.

I knew the flowers, I knew the leaves, I knew
The tearful glimmer of the languid dawn
On those long, rank, dark wood-walks drenched in dew,
Leading from lawn to lawn.

XX.

The smell of violets, hidden in the green,
Poured back into my empty soul and frame
The times when I remember to have been
Joyful and free from blame.

XXI.

And from within me a clear under-tone
Thrilled through mine ears in that unblissful clime,
"Pass freely through! the wood is all thine own,
Until the end of time."

XXII.

At length I saw a lady within call,
Stiller than chiselled marble, standing above;
A daughter of the gods, divinely tall,
And most divinely fair.

XXIII.

Her loveliness with shame and with surprise
Froze my swift speech; she turning on me
The star-like sorrows of immortal eyes,
Spoke slowly in her place.

XXIV.

"I had great beauty: ask thou not my name:
No one can be more wise than destiny.
Many drew swords and died. Where'er I came
I brought calamity."

XXV.

"No marvel, sovereign lady! in fair field,
Myself for such a face had boldly died,"
I answered free, and turning I appealed
To one that stood beside.

XXVI.

But she, with sick and scornful looks averse,
To her full height her stately stature draws;
"My youth," she said, "was blasted with a curse:
This woman was the cause.

XXVII.

"I was cut off from hope in that sad place,
Which yet to name my spirit loathes and fears:
My father held his hand upon his face:
I, blinded with my tears,

XXVIII.

"Still strove to speak: my voice was thick with sighs
As in a dream. Dimly I could descry

The ste n black-bearded kings, with wolfish eyes,
Waiting to see me die.

XXIX.

"The high masts flickered as they lay afloat;
The crowds, the temples, wavered, and the shore;
The bright death quivered at the victim's throat;
Touched; and I knew no more."

XXX.

Whereto the other with a downward brow:
"I would the white cold heavy-plunging foam,
Whirled by the wind, had rolled me deep below,
Then when I left my home."

XXXI.

Her slow full words sank through the silence drear,
As thunder-drops fall on a sleeping sea:
Sudden I heard a voice that cried, "Come here,
That I may look on thee."

XXXII.

I turning saw, throned on a flowery rise,
One sitting on a crimson scarf unrolled;
A queen with swarthy cheeks and bold black eyes,
Brow-bound with burning gold.

XXXIII.

She, flashing forth a haughty smile, began:
"I governed men by change, and so I swayed
All moods. 'Tis long since I have seen a man.
Once, like the moon, I made

XXXIV.

"The ever-shifting currents of the blood
According to my humor ebb and flow.
I have no men to govern in this wood:
That makes my only woe.

XXXV.

"Nay—yet it chafes me that I could not bend
One will; nor tame and tutor with mine eye
That dull cold-blooded Cæsar. Prithee, friend,
Where is Mark Antony?

XXXVI.

"The man my lover, with whom I rode sublime
On Fortune's neck: we sat as God by God:
The Nilus would have risen before his time
And flooded at our nod.

XXXVII.

"We drank the Lybian Sun to sleep, and lit
Lamps which outburned Canopus. O my life
In Egypt! O the dalliance and the wit,
The flattery and the strife,

XXXVIII.

"And the wild kiss, when fresh from war's alarms,
My Hercules, my Roman Antony,
My mailed Bacchus leapt into my arms,
Contented there to die!

XXXIX.

"And there he died; and when I heard my name
Sighed forth with life I would not brook my fear
Of the other: with a worm I balked his fame.
What else was left?—look here!"

XL.

(With that she tore her robe apart, and half
The polished argent of her breast to sight
Laid bare. Thereto she pointed with a laugh,
Showing the aspick's bite:)

XLI.

"I died a Queen. The Roman soldier found
Me lying dead, my crown about my brows,

A name forever!—lying robed and crowned,
Worthy a Roman spouse."

XLII.

Her warbling voice, a lyre of widest range
Struck by all passion, did fall down and glance
From tone to tone, and glided through all change
Of liveliest utterance.

XLIII.

When she made pause I knew not for delight;
Because with sudden motion from the ground
She raised her piercing orbs and filled with light
The interval of sound.

XLIV.

Still with their fires Love tipt his keenest darts;
As once they drew into two burning rings
All beams of Love, melting the mighty hearts
Of captains and of kings.

XLV.

Slowly my sense undazzled. Then I heard
A noise of some one coming through the lawn,
And singing clearer than the crested bird,
That claps his wings at dawn.

XLVI.

"The torrent brooks of hallowed Israel
From craggy hollows pouring, late and soon,
Sound all night long, in falling through the dell,
Far-heard beneath the moon.

XLVII.

"The balmy moon of blessed Israel
Floods all the deep-blue gloom with beams divine:
All night the splintered crags that wall the dell
With spires of silver shine."

XLVIII.

As one that museth where broad sunshine laves
The lawn by some cathedral, through the door
Hearing the holy organ rolling waves
Of sound on roof and floor

XLIX.

Within, and anthem sung, is charmed and tied
To where he stands,—so stood I, when that flow
Of music left the lips of her that died
To save her father's vow;

L.

The daughter of the warrior Gileadite,
A maiden pure; as when she went along
From Mizpeh's towered gate with welcome light,
With timbrel and with song.

LI.

My words leapt forth: "Heaven heads the count of crimes
With that wild oath." She rendered answer high:
"Not so, nor once alone; a thousand times
I would be born and die.

LII.

"Single I grew, like some green plant, whose root
Creeps to the garden water-pipes beneath,
Feeding the flower: but ere my flower to fruit
Changed, I was ripe for death.

LIII.

"My God, my land, my father—these did move
Me from my bliss of life, that Nature gave,
Lowered softly with a threefold cord of love
Down to a silent grave.

LIV.

1 I went mourning, 'No fair Hebrew boy
Shall smile away my maiden blame among
.e Hebrew mothers,'—emptied of all joy,
Leaving the dance and song.

LV.

"Leaving the olive-gardens far below,
Leaving the promise of my bridal bower,
The valleys of grape-loaded vines that glow
Beneath the battled tower.

LVI.

"The light white cloud swam over us. Anon
We heard the lion roaring from his den;
We saw the large white stars rise one by one,
Or, from the darkened glen,

LVII.

"Saw God divide the night with flying flame,
And thunder on the everlasting hills.
I heard Him, for He spake, and grief became
A solemn scorn of ills.

LVIII.

"When the next moon was rolled into the sky,
Strength came to me that equalled my desire.
How beautiful a thing it was to die
For God and for my sire!

LIX.

"It comforts me in this one thought to dwell,
That I subdued me to my father's will;
Because the kiss he gave me, ere I fell,
Sweetens the spirit still.

LX.

"Moreover, it is written that my race
Hewed Ammon, hip and thigh, from Aroer

On Arnon unto Minneth." Here her face
Glowed, as I looked at her.

LXI.

She locked her lips: she left me where I stood:
"Glory to God," she sang, and past afar,
Thridding the sombre boskage of the wood,
Toward the morning-star.

LXII.

Losing her carol I stood pensively,
As one that from a casement leans his head,
When midnight bells cease ringing suddenly,
And the old year is dead.

LXIII.

"Alas! alas!" a low voice, full of care,
Murmured beside me; "Turn and look on me:
I am that Rosamond, whom men call fair,
If what I was I be.

LXIV.

"Would I had been some maiden coarse and poor!
O me! that I should ever see the light!
Those dragon eyes of angered Eleanor
Do hunt me, day and night."

LXV.

She ceased in tears, fallen from hope and trust:
To whom the Egyptian: "O, you tamely died!
You should have clung to Fulvia's waist, and thrust
The dagger through her side."

LXVI.

With that sharp sound the white dawn's creeping beams,
Stolen to my brain, dissolved the mystery
Of folded sleep. The captain of my dreams
Ruled in the eastern sky.

LXVII.

Morn broadened on the borders of the dark,
Ere I saw her who clasped in her last trance
Her murdered father's head, or Joan of Arc,
A light of ancient France;

LXVIII.

Or her, who knew that Love can vanquish Death,
Who kneeling, with one arm about her king,
Drew forth the poison with her balmy breath,
Sweet as new buds in Spring.

LXIX.

No memory labors longer from the deep
Gold-mines of thought to lift the hidden ore
That glimpses, moving up, than I from sleep
To gather and tell o'er

LXX.

Each little sound and sight. With what dull pain
Compassed, how eagerly I sought to strike
Into that wondrous track of dreams again!
But no two dreams are like.

LXXI.

As when a soul laments, which hath been blest,
Desiring what is mingled with past years,
In yearnings that can never be exprest
By signs or groans or tears;

LXXII.

Because all words, though culled with choicest art,
Failing to give the bitter of the sweet,
Wither beneath the palate, and the heart
Faints, faded by its heat.

MARGARET.

O SWEET pale Margaret,
O rare pale Margaret,
What lit your eyes with tearful power,
Like moonlight on a falling shower?
Who lent you, love, your mortal dower
Of pensive thought and aspect pale,
Your melancholy, sweet and frail
As perfume of the cuckoo-flower?
From the westward-winding flood,
From the evening-lighted wood,
From all things outward you have won
A tearful grace, as though you stood
Between the rainbow and the sun.

The very smile before you speak,
That dimples your transparent cheek,
Encircles all the heart, and feedeth
The senses with a still delight
Of dainty sorrow without sound,
Like the tender amber round,
Which the moon about her spreadeth,
Moving through a fleecy night.

You love, remaining peacefully,
To hear the murmur of the strife,
But enter not the toil of life.
Your spirit is the calmed sea,
Laid by the tumult of the fight.
You are the evening star, alway
Remaining betwixt dark and bright:
Lulled echoes of laborious day
Come to you, gleams of mellow light
Float by you on the verge of night.

What can it matter, Margaret,
What songs below the waning stars

The lion-heart, Plantagenet,
Sang looking through his prison bars?
Exquisite Margaret, who can tell
The last wild thought of Chatelet,
Just ere the falling axe did part
The burning brain from the true heart,
Even in her sight he loved so well?

A fairy shield your Genius made
And gave you on your natal day.
Your sorrow, only sorrow's shade,
Keeps real sorrow far away.
You move not in such solitudes,
You are not less divine,
But more human in your moods,
Than your twin-sister, Adeline.
Your hair is darker, and your eyes
Touched with a somewhat darker hue,
And less aërially blue,
But ever trembling through the dew
Of dainty-woful sympathies.

O sweet pale Margaret,
O rare pale Margaret,
Come down, come down, and hear me speak:
Tie up the ringlets on your cheek:
The sun is just about to set.
The arching limes are tall and shady,
And faint, rainy lights are seen,
Moving in the leavy beech.
Rise from the feast of sorrow, lady,
Where all day long you sit between
Joy and woe, and whisper each.
Or only look across the lawn,
Look out below your bower-eaves,
Look down, and let your blue eyes dawn
Upon me through the jasmine-leaves.

THE BLACKBIRD.

O Blackbird! sing me something well:
While all the neighbors shoot thee round,
I keep smooth plats of fruitful ground,
Where thou may'st warble, eat and dwell.

The espaliers and the standards all
Are thine; the range of lawn and park:
The unnetted blackhearts ripen dark,
All thine, against the garden wall.

Yet, though I spared thee all the spring,
Thy sole delight is, sitting still,
With that gold dagger of thy bill
To fret the summer jenneting.

A golden bill! the silver tongue,
Cold February loved, is dry:
Plenty corrupts the melody
That made thee famous once, when young:

And in the sultry garden-squares,
Now thy flute-notes are changed to coarse,
I hear thee not at all, or hoarse
As when a hawker hawks his wares.

Take warning! he that will not sing
While yon sun prospers in the blue,
Shall sing for want, ere leaves are new,
Caught in the frozen palms of Spring.

THE DEATH OF THE OLD YEAR.

I.

Full knee-deep lies the winter snow,
And the winter winds are wearily sighing:
Toll ye the church-bell sad and slow,
And tread softly and speak low,
For the old year lies a-dying.
Old year, you must not die;
You came to us so readily,
You lived with us so steadily,
Old year, you shall not die.

II.

He lieth still: he doth not move:
He will not see the dawn of day.
He hath no other life above.
He gave me a friend, and a true, true-love,
And the New-year will take 'em away.
Old year, you must not go;
So long as you have been with us,
Such joy as you have seen with us,
Old year, you shall not go.

III.

He frothed his bumpers to the brim;
A jollier year we shall not see.
But though his eyes are waxing dim,
And though his foes speak ill of him,
He was a friend to me.
Old year, you shall not die;
We did so laugh and cry with you,
I've half a mind to die with you,
Old year, if you must die.

IV.

He was full of joke and jest,
But all his merry quips are o'er.

To see him die, across the waste
His son and heir doth ride post-haste,
But he'll be dead before.
Every one for his own.
The night is starry and cold, my friend,
And the New-year, blithe and bold, my friend,
Comes up to take his own.

V.

How hard he breathes! over the snow
I heard just now the crowing cock.
The shadows flicker to and fro:
The cricket chirps: the light burns low:
'Tis nearly twelve o'clock.
Shake hands, before you die.
Old year, we'll dearly rue for you:
What is it we can do for you?
Speak out before you die.

VI.

His face is growing sharp and thin.
Alack! our friend is gone.
Close up his eyes: tie up his chin:
Step from the corpse, and let him in
That standeth there alone,
And waiteth at the door.
There's a new foot on the floor, my friend,
And a new face at the door, my friend,
A new face at the door.

To J. S.

I.

The wind, that beats the mountain, blows
More softly round the open wold,
And gently comes the world to those
That are cast in gentle mould.

II.

And me this knowledge bolder made,
Or else I had not dared to flow
In these words toward you, and invade
Even with a verse your holy woe.

III.

'Tis strange that those we lean on most,
Those in whose laps our limbs are nursed,
Fall into shadow, soonest lost:
Those we love first are taken first.

IV.

God gives us love. Something to love
He lends us; but, when love is grown
To ripeness, that on which it throve
Falls off, and love is left alone.

V.

This is the curse of time. Alas!
In grief I am not all unlearned;
Once through mine own doors Death did pass;
One went, who never hath returned.

VI.

He will not smile—not speak to me
Once more. Two years his chair is seen
Empty before us. That was he
Without whose life I had not been.

VII.

Your loss is rarer; for this star
Rose with you through a little arc
Of heaven, nor having wandered far,
Shot on the sudden into dark.

VIII.

I knew your brother: his mute dust
I honor, and his living worth:

A man more pure and bold and just
Was never born into the earth.

IX.

I have not looked upon you nigh,
Since that dear soul hath fallen asleep.
Great Nature is more wise than I:
I will not tell you not to weep.

X.

And though my own eyes fill with dew,
Drawn from the spirit through the brain,
I will not even preach to you,
"Weep, weeping dulls the inward pain."

XI.

Let Grief be her own mistress still.
She loveth her own anguish deep
More than much pleasure. Let her will
Be done—to weep or not to weep.

XII.

I will not say "God's ordinance
Of Death is blown in every wind;"
For that is not a common chance
That takes away a noble mind.

XIII.

His memory long will live alone
In all our hearts, as mournful light
That broods above the fallen sun,
And dwells in heaven half the night.

XIV.

Vain solace! Memory standing near
Cast down her eyes, and in her throat
Her voice seemed distant, and a tear
Dropt on the letters as I wrote.

XV.

I wrote I know not what. In truth,
How *should* I soothe you anyway,
Who miss the brother of your youth?
Yet something I did wish to say:

XVI.

For he too was a friend to me:
Both are my friends, and my true breast
Bleedeth for both; yet it may be
That only silence suiteth best.

XVII.

Words weaker than your grief would make
Grief more. 'Twere better I should cease
Although myself could almost take
The place of him that sleeps in peace:

XVIII.

Sleep sweetly, tender heart, in peace:
Sleep, holy spirit, blessed soul,
While the stars burn, the moons increase,
And the great ages onward roll.

XIX.

Sleep till the end, true soul and sweet.
Nothing comes to thee new or strange.
Sleep full of rest from head to feet;
Lie still, dry dust, secure of change.

"YOU ASK ME, WHY, THOUGH ILL AT EASE."

You ask me, why, though ill at ease.
Within this region I subsist,
Whose spirits falter in the mist,
And languish for the purple seas?

It is the land that freemen till,
That sober-suited Freedom chose,
The land where, girt with friends or foes,
A man may speak the thing he will;

A land of settled government,
A land of just and old renown,
Where Freedom broadens slowly down
From precedent to precedent:

Where faction seldom gathers head,
But by degrees to fulness wrought,
The strength of some diffusive thought
Hath time and space to work and spread.

Should banded unions persecute
Opinion, and induce a time
When single thought is civil crime,
And individual freedom mute;

Though Power should make from land to land
The name of Britain trebly great—
Though every channel of the State
Should almost choke with golden sand—

Yet waft me from the harbor-mouth,
Wild wind! I seek a warmer sky,
And I will see before I die
The palms and temples of the South.

"OF OLD SAT FREEDOM ON THE HEIGHTS."

Of old sat Freedom on the heights,
The thunders breaking at her feet:
Above her shook the starry lights:
She heard the torrents meet.

There in her place she did rejoice,
Self-gathered in her prophet-mind,
But fragments of her mighty voice
Came rolling on the wind.

Then stept she down through town and field
To mingle with the human race,
And part by part to men revealed
The fulness of her face—

Grave mother of majestic works,
From her isle-altar gazing down,
Who, God-like, grasps the triple forks,
And, King-like, wears the crown:

Her open eyes desire the truth.
The wisdom of a thousand years
Is in them. May perpetual youth
Keep dry their light from tears;

That her fair form may stand and shine,
Make bright our days and light our dreams,
Turning to scorn with lips divine
The falsehood of extremes!

"LOVE THOU THY LAND, WITH LOVE FAR BROUGHT."

Love thou thy land, with love far brought
From out the storied Past, and used
Within the Present, but transfused
Through future time by power of thought.

True love turned round on fixed poles,
Love that endures not sordid ends,
For English natures, freemen, friends,
Thy brothers and immortal souls.

But pamper not a hasty time,
  Nor feed with crude imaginings
  The herd, wild hearts and feeble wings,
That every sophister can lime.

Deliver not the tasks of might
  To weakness, neither hide the ray
  From those, not blind, who wait for day,
Though sitting girt with doubtful light.

Make knowledge circle with the winds;
  But let her herald, Reverence, fly
  Before her to whatever sky
Bear seed of men and growth of minds.

Watch what main-currents draw the years:
  Cut Prejudice against the grain:
  But gentle words are always gain:
Regard the weakness of thy peers:

Nor toil for title, place, or touch
  Of pension, neither count on praise:
  It grows to guerdon after-days:
Nor deal in watchwords overmuch;

Not clinging to some ancient saw:
  Not mastered by some modern term;
  Not swift nor slow to change, but firm:
And in its season bring the law;

That from Discussion's lip may fall
  With Life, that, working strongly, binds—
  Set in all lights by many minds,
To close the interests of all.

For Nature also, cold and warm,
  And moist and dry, devising long,
  Through many agents making strong,
Matures the individual form.

Meet is it changes should control
Our being, lest we rust in ease.
We all are changed by still degrees,
All but the basis of the soul.

So let the change which comes be free
To ingroove itself with that, which flies
And work, a joint of state, that plies
Its office, moved with sympathy.

A saying hard to shape in act;
For all the past of Time reveals
A bridal dawn of thunder-peals,
Wherever Thought hath wedded Fact.

Even now we hear with inward strife
A motion toiling in the gloom—
The Spirit of the years to come
Yearning to mix himself with Life.

A slow-developed strength awaits
Completion in a painful school;
Phantoms of other forms of rule,
New Majesties of mighty States—

The warders of the growing hour,
But vague in vapor, hard to mark;
And round them sea and air are dark
With great contrivances of Power.

Of many changes, aptly joined,
Is bodied forth the second whole.
Regard gradation, lest the soul
Of Discord race the rising wind:

A wind to puff your idol-fires,
And heap their ashes on the head;
To shame the boast so often made,
That we are wiser than our sires.

O yet, if Nature's evil star
  Drive men in manhood, as in youth,
  To follow flying steps of Truth
Across the brazen bridge of war—

If New and Old, disastrous feud,
  Must ever shock, like armed foes,
  And this be true, till Time shall close,
That Principles are rained in blood;

Not yet the wise of heart would cease
  To hold his hope through shame and guilt,
  But with his hand against the hilt,
Would pace the troubled land, like Peace;

Not less, though dogs of Faction bay,
  Would serve his kind in deed and word,
  Certain, if knowledge bring the sword,
That knowledge takes the sword away—

Would love the gleams of good that broke
  From either side, nor veil his eyes:
  And if some dreadful need should rise,
Would strike, and firmly, and one stroke:

To-morrow yet would reap to-day,
  As we bear blossom of the dead;
  Earn well the thrifty months, nor wed
Raw Haste, half-sister to Delay.

THE GOOSE.

I.

I KNEW an old wife lean and poor,
  Her rags scarce held together;
There strode a stranger to the door,
  And it was windy weather.

II.

He held a goose upon his arm,
He uttered rhyme and reason,
"Here, take the goose, and keep you warm,
It is a stormy season."

III.

She caught the white goose by the leg,
A goose—'twas no great matter.
The goose let fall a golden egg
With cackle and with clatter.

IV.

She dropt the goose, and caught the pelf,
And ran to tell her neighbors;
And blessed herself, and cursed herself,
And rested from her labors.

V.

And feeding high, and living soft,
Grew plump and able-bodied;
Until the grave churchwarden doffed,
The parson smirked and nodded.

VI.

So sitting, served by man and maid,
She felt her heart grow prouder:
But ah! the more the white goose laid,
It clacked and cackled louder.

VII.

It cluttered here, it chuckled there;
It stirred the old wife's mettle:
She shifted in her elbow-chair,
And hurled the pan and kettle.

VIII.

"A quinsy choke thy cursed note!"
Then waxed her anger stronger.

"Go, take the goose, and wring her throat,
I will not bear it longer."

IX.

Then yelped the cur, and yawled the cat;
Ran Gaffer, stumbled Gammer.
The goose flew this way and flew that,
And filled the house with clamor.

X.

As head and heels upon the floor
They floundered all together,
There strode a stranger to the door,
And it was windy weather:

IX.

He took the goose upon his arm,
He uttered words of scorning;
"So keep you cold, or keep you warm,
It is a stormy morning."

XII.

The wild wind rang from park and plain,
And round the attics rumbled,
Till all the tables danced again,
And half the chimneys tumbled.

XIII.

The glass blew in, the fire blew out,
The blast was hard and harder.
Her cap blew off, her gown blew up,
And a whirlwind cleared the larder;

XIV.

And while on all sides breaking loose
Her household fled the danger,
Quoth she, "The Devil take the goose,
And God forget the stranger!"

THE EPIC.

At Francis Allen's on the Christmas-eve,—
The game of forfeits done—the girls all kissed
Beneath the sacred bush and past away—
The parson Holmes, the poet Everard Hall,
The host and I, sat round the wassail-bowl,
Then half-way ebbed: and there we held a talk,
How all the old honor had from Christmas gone,
Or gone, or dwindled down to some odd games
In some odd nooks like this; till I, tired out
With cutting eights that day upon the pond,
Where, three times slipping from the outer edge,
I bumped the ice into three several stars,
Fell in a doze; and half-awake I heard
The parson taking wide and wider sweeps,
Now harping on the church-commissioners,
Now hawking at Geology and schism;
Until I woke, and found him settled down
Upon the general decay of faith
Right through the world—"at home was little left,
And none abroad: there was no anchor, none,
To hold by." Francis, laughing, clapt his hand
On Everard's shoulder, with "I hold by him."
"And I," quoth Everard, "by the wassail-bowl."
"Why yes," I said, "we knew your gift that way
At college: but another which you had,
I mean of verse, (for so we held it then,)
What came of that?" "You know," said Frank,
"he burnt
His epic of King Arthur, some twelve books"—
And then to me demanding why? "O, sir,
He thought that nothing new was said, or else
Something so said 'twas nothing—that a truth
Looks freshest in the fashion of the day:
God knows: he has a mint of reasons: ask.
It pleased *me* well enough." "Nay, nay," said Hall,
"Why take the style of those heroic times?

For nature brings not back the Mastodon,
Nor we those times; and why should any man
Remodel models? these twelve books of mine
Were faint Homeric echoes, nothing worth,
Mere chaff and draff, much better burnt." "But I,"
Said Francis, "picked the eleventh from this hearth,
And have it: keep a thing, its use will come.
I hoard it as a sugar-plum for Holmes."
He laughed, and I, though sleepy, like a horse
That hears the corn-bin open, pricked my ears;
For I remembered Everard's college fame
When we were Freshmen: then at my request
He brought it; and the poet, little urged,
But with some prelude of disparagement,
Read, mouthing out his hollow oes and aes,
Deep-chested music, and to this result.

MORTE D'ARTHUR.

So all day long the noise of battle rolled
Among the mountains by the winter sea;
Until King Arthur's table, man by man,
Had fallen in Lyonness about their Lord,
King Arthur: then, because his wound was deep,
The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,
Sir Bedivere, the last of all his knights,
And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,
A broken chancel with a broken cross,
That stood on a dark strait of barren land.
On one side lay the Ocean, and on one
Lay a great water, and the moon was full.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
"The sequel of to-day unsolders all
The goodliest fellowship of famous knights
Whereof this world holds record. Such a sleep
They sleep—the men I loved. I think that we
Shall never more, at any future time,
Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds,

Walking about the gardens and the halls
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.
I perish by this people which I made,—
Though Merlin sware that I should come again
To rule once more—but let what will be, be,
I am so deeply smitten through the helm
That without help I cannot last till morn.
Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,
Which was my pride: for thou rememberest how
In those old days, one summer noon, an arm
Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
Holding the sword—and how I rowed across
And took it, and have worn it, like a king:
And, wheresoever I am sung or told
In aftertime this also shall be known:
But now delay not: take Excalibur,
And fling him far into the middle mere:
Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring me word."
To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere:
"It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus,
Aidless, alone, and smitten through the helm.
A little thing may harm a wounded man.
Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,
Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee word."
So saying, from the ruined shrine he stept,
And in the moon athwart the place of tombs,
Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,
Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang
Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, stepping down
By zigzag paths, and juts of pointed rock,
Came on the shining levels of the lake.
There drew he forth the brand Excalibur,
And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran forth
And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt:
For all the haft twinkled with diamond sparks,
Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work
Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so long

That both his eyes were dazzled, as he stood
This way and that dividing the swift mind,
In act to throw; but at the last it seemed
Better to leave Excalibur concealed
There in the many-knotted waterflags,
That whistled stiff and dry about the marge
So strode he back slow to the wounded King.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
"Hast thou performed my mission which I gave?
What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,
And the wild water lapping on the crag."

To whom replied King Arthur, faint and pale:
"Thou hast betrayed thy nature and thy name,
Not rendering true answer, as beseemed
Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight:
For surer sign had followed, either hand
Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.
This is a shameful thing for men to lie.
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again
As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing
I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring me word."

Then went Sir Bedivere the second time
Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere,
Counting the dewy pebbles, fixed in thought;
But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,
How curiously and strangely chased, he smote
His palms together, and he cried aloud.

"And if indeed I cast the brand away,
Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,
Should thus be lost forever from the earth,
Which might have pleased the eyes of many men.
What good should follow this, if this were done?
What harm, undone? deep harm to disobey,
Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.
Were it well to obey then, if a king demand
An act unprofitable, against himself?
The king is sick, and knows not what he does.
What record, or what relic of my lord

Should be to aftertime, but empty breath
And rumors of a doubt? but were this kept,
Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,
Some one might show it at a joust of arms,
Saying, 'King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,
Wrought by the lonely maiden of the Lake.
Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps
Upon the hidden bases of the hills.'
So might some old man speak in the aftertime
To all the people, winning reverence.
But now much honor and much fame were lost."
So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,
And hid Excalibur the second time,
And so strode back slow to the wounded King.
Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heavily:
"What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?"
And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"I heard the water lapping on the crag,
And the long ripple washing in the reeds."
To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath:
"Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,
Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is me!
Authority forgets a dying king,
Laid widowed of the power in his eye
That bowed the will. I see thee what thou art.
For thou, the latest left of all my knights,
In whom should meet the offices of all,
Thou wouldst betray me for the precious hilt;
Either from lust of gold, or like a girl
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.
Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,
And the third time may prosper, get thee hence:
But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,
I will arise and slay thee with my hands."
Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,
And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged
Among the bulrush-beds, and clutched the sword,
And strongly wheeled and threw it. The great brand
Made lightnings in the splendor of the moon,

And flashing round and round, and whirled in an
arch,
Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,
Seen where the moving isles of winter shock
By night, with noises of the northern sea.
So flashed and fell the brand Excalibur:
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
And caught him by the hilt, and brandished him
Three times, and drew him under in the meer.
And lightly went the other to the King.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker breath:
"Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.
Speak out: what is it thou hast heard, or seen!"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems
Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,
Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,
Not though I live three lives of mortal men,
So great a miracle as yonder hilt.
Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling him;
But when I looked again, behold an arm,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
That caught him by the hilt, and brandished him
Three times, and drew him under in the meer."

And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard:
"My end draws nigh; 'tis time that I were gone.
Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,
And bear me to the margin; yet I fear
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die.'

So saying, from the pavement he half rose,
Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,
And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes
As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere
Remorsefully regarded through his tears,
And would have spoken, but he found not words,
Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,
O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,
And rising bore him through the place of tombs.

But, as he walked, King Arthur panted hard
Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed
When all the house is mute. So sighed the King,
Muttering and murmuring at his ear, "Quick quick!
I fear it is too late, and I shall die."
But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,
Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he walked
Larger than human on the frozen hills.
He heard the deep behind him, and a cry
Before. His own thought drove him like a goad.
Dry clashed his harness in the icy caves
And barren chasms, and all to left and right
The bare black cliff clanged round him, as he based
His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang
Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels—
And on a sudden, lo! the level lake,
And the long glories of the winter moon.
Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge,
Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,
Beneath them; and descending they were ware
That all the decks were dense with stately forms
Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream—by these
Three Queens with crowns of gold—and from them rose
A cry that shivered to the tingling stars,
And, as it were one voice, an agony
Of lamentation, like a wind, that shrills
All night in a waste land, where no one comes,
Or hath come, since the making of the world.
Then murmured Arthur, "Place me in the barge,"
And to the barge they came. There those three Queens
Put forth their hands, and took the King, and wept.
But she that rose the tallest of them all
And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,
And loosed the shattered casque, and chafed his hands,

And called him by his name, complaining loud,
And dropping bitter tears against his brow
Striped with dark blood: for all his face was white
And colorless, and like the withered moon
Smote by the fresh beam of the springing east;
And all his greaves and cuisses dashed with drops
Of onset: and the light and lustrous curls—
That made his forehead like a rising sun
High from the däis-throne—were parched with dust;
Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,
Mixed with the knightly growth that fringed his lips.
So like a shattered column lay the King;
Not like that Arthur who, with lance in rest,
From spur to plume a star of tournament,
Shot through the lists at Camelot, and charged
Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere,
"Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go?
Where shall I hide my forehead and my eyes?
For now I see the true old times are dead,
When every morning brought a noble chance,
And every chance brought out a noble knight.
Such times have been not since the light that led
The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.
But now the whole ROUND TABLE is dissolved
Which was an image of the mighty world;
And I, the last, go forth companionless,
And the days darken round me, and the years,
Among new men, strange faces, other minds."

And slowly answered Arthur from the barge:
"The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfils himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.
Comfort thyself: what comfort is in me?
I have lived my life, and that which I have done
May He within himself make pure! but thou,
If thou shouldst never see my face again,

Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.
But now farewell. I am going a long way
With these thou seest—if indeed I go
(For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)
To the island-valley of Avilion;
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies
Deep-meadowed, happy, fair with orchard-lawns
And bowery hollows crowned with summer sea,
Where I will heal me of my grievous wound."
So said he, and the barge with oar and sail
Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted swan,
That, fluting a wild carol, ere her death,
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood
With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere
Revolving many memories, till the hull
Looked one black dot against the verge of dawn,
And on the meer the wailing died away.

Here ended Hall, and our last light, that long
Had winked and threatened darkness, flared and fell;
At which the Parson, sent to sleep with sound,
And waked with silence, grunted "Good!" but we
Sat rapt: it was the tone with which he read—
Perhaps some modern touches here and there

Redeemed it from the charge of nothingness—
Or else we loved the man, and prized his work;
I know not: but we sitting, as I said,
The cock crew loud: as at that time of year
The lusty bird takes every hour for dawn:
Then Francis, muttering, like a man ill-used,
"There now—that's nothing!" drew a little back,
And drove his heel into the smouldered log,
That sent a blast of sparkles up the flue:
And so to bed; where yet in sleep I seemed
To sail with Arthur under looming shores,
Point after point, till on to dawn, when dreams
Begin to feel the truth and stir of day,
To me, methought, who waited with a crowd,
There came a bark that, blowing forward, bore
King Arthur, like a modern gentleman
Of stateliest port; and all the people cried,
"Arthur is come again: he cannot die."
Then those that stood upon the hills behind
Repeated—"Come again, and thrice as fair;"
And, further inland, voices echoed—"Come
With all good things, and war shall be no more."
At this a hundred bells began to peal,
That with the sound I woke, and heard indeed
The clear church-bells ring in the Christmas morn.

THE GARDENER'S DAUGHTER;

OR,

THE PICTURES.

This morning is the morning of the day
When I and Eustace from the city went
To see the Gardener's Daughter; I and he,
Brothers in Art; a friendship so complete
Portioned in halves between us, that we grew
The fable of the city where we dwelt.

My Eustace might have sat for Hercules;
So muscular he spread, so broad a breast.
He, by some law that holds in love, and draws
The greater to the lesser, long desired
A certain miracle of symmetry,
A miniature of loveliness, all grace
Summed up and closed in little;—Juliet, she
So light of foot, so light of spirit—oh, she
To me myself, for some three careless moons,
The summer pilot of an empty heart
Unto the shores of nothing! Know you not
Such touches are but embassies of love,
To tamper with the feelings, ere he found
Empire for life? but Eustace painted her,
And said to me, she sitting with us then,
"When will *you* paint like this?" and I replied,
(My words were half in earnest, half in jest,)
"'Tis not your work, but Love's. Love unperceived.
A more ideal Artist he than all,
Came, drew your pencil from you, made those eyes
Darker than darkest pansies, and that hair
More black than ashbuds in the front of March."
And Juliet answered laughing, "Go and see
The Gardener's daughter: trust me, after that,
You scarce can fail to match his masterpiece."
And up we rose, and on the spur we went.
Not wholly in the busy world, nor quite
Beyond it, blooms the garden that I love.
News from the humming city comes to it
In sound of funeral or of marriage bells;
And, sitting muffled in dark leaves, you hear
The windy clanging of the minster clock;
Although between it and the garden lies
A league of grass, washed by a slow broad stream,
That, stirred with languid pulses of the oar,
Waves all its lazy lilies, and creeps on,
Barge-laden, to three arches of a bridge
Crowned with the minster-towers.

The fields between
Are dewy-fresh, browsed by deep-uddered kine,
And all about the large lime feathers low,
The lime a summer home of murmurous wings.
In that still place she, hoarded in herself,
Grew, seldom seen : not less among us lived
Her fame from lip to lip. Who had not heard
Of Rose, the Gardener's daughter? Where was he,
So blunt in memory, so old at heart,
At such a distance from his youth in grief,
That, having seen, forgot? The common mouth,
So gross to express delight, in praise of her
Grew oratory. Such a lord is Love,
And Beauty such a mistress of the world.
And if I said that Fancy, led by Love,
Would play with flying forms and images,
Yet this is also true, that, long before
I looked upon her, when I heard her name
My heart was like a prophet to my heart,
And told me I should love. A crowd of hopes,
That sought to sow themselves like winged seeds,
Born out of every thing I heard and saw,
Fluttered about my senses and my soul ;
And vague desires, like fitful blasts of balm
To one that travels quickly, made the air
Of Life delicious, and all kinds of thought,
That verged upon them, sweeter than the dream
Dreamed by a happy man, when the dark East,
Unseen, is brightening to his bridal morn.
And sure this orbit of the memory folds
Forever in itself the day we went
To see her. All the land in flowery squares,
Beneath a broad and equal-blowing wind,
Smelt of the coming summer, as one large cloud
Drew downward : but all else of Heaven was pure
Up to the Sun, and May from verge to verge,
And May with me from head to heel. And now,
As though 'twere yesterday, as though it were

The hour just flown, that morn with all its sound,
(For those old Mays had thrice the life of these,)
Rings in mine ears. The steer forgot to graze,
And, where the hedge-row cuts the pathway, stood,
Leaning his horns into the neighbor field,
And lowing to his fellows. From the woods
Came voices of the well-contented doves.
The lark could scarce get out his notes for joy,
But shook his song together as he neared
His happy home, the ground. To left and right,
The cuckoo told his name to all the hills;
The mellow ouzel fluted in the elm;
The redcap whistled; and the nightingale
Sang loud, as though he were the bird of day.
And Eustace turned, and smiling said to me,
"Hear how the bushes echo! by my life,
These birds have joyful thoughts. Think you they sing
Like poets, from the vanity of song?
Or have they any sense of why they sing?
And would they praise the heavens for what they have?"
And I made answer, "Were there nothing else
For which to praise the heavens but only love,
That only love were cause enough for praise."
Lightly he laughed, as one that read my thought,
And on we went; but ere an hour had passed,
We reached a meadow slanting to the North;
Down which a well-worn pathway courted us
To one green wicket in a privet hedge;
This, yielding, gave into a grassy walk
Through crowded lilac-ambush trimly pruned;
And one warm gust, full-fed with perfume, blew
Beyond us, as we entered in the cool.
The garden stretches southward. In the midst
A cedar spread his dark-green layers of shade.
The garden-glasses shone, and momently
The twinkling laurel scattered silver lights.
"Eustace," I said, "this wonder keeps the house."

He nodded, but a moment afterwards
He cried, "Look! look!" Before he ceased I turned,
And, ere a star can wink, beheld her there.
For up the porch there grew an Eastern rose,
That, flowering high, the last night's gale had caught,
And blown across the walk. One arm aloft—
Gowned in pure white, that fitted to the shape—
Holding the bush, to fix it back, she stood.
A single stream of all her soft brown hair
Poured on one side: the shadow of the flowers
Stole all the golden gloss, and, wavering,
Lovingly lower, trembled on her waist—
Ah, happy shade!—and still went wavering down,
But, ere it touched a foot that might have danced
The greensward into greener circles, dipt,
And mixed with shadows of the common ground!
But the full day dwelt on her brows, and sunned
Her violet eyes, and all her Hebe-bloom,
And doubled his own warmth against her lips,
And on the bounteous wave of such a breast
As never pencil drew. Half light, half shade,
She stood, a sight to make an old man young.
So rapt, we neared the house; but she, a Rose
In roses, mingled with her fragrant toil,
Nor heard us come, nor from her tendance turned
Into the world without; till close at hand,
And almost ere I knew mine own intent,
This murmur broke the stillness of that air
Which brooded round about her:
"Ah, one rose,
One rose, but one, by those fair fingers culled,
Were worth a hundred kisses pressed on lips
Less exquisite than thine!"
She looked: but all
Suffused with blushes—neither self-possessed
Nor startled, but betwixt this mood and that,
Divided in a graceful quiet—paused,
And dropt the branch she held, and turning, wound

Her looser hair in braid, and stirred her lips
For some sweet answer, though no answer came;
Nor yet refused the rose, but granted it,
And moved away, and left me, statue-like,
In act to render thanks.
I, that whole day,
Saw her no more, although I lingered there
Till every daisy slept, and Love's white star
Beamed through the thickened cedar in the dusk.
So home we went, and all the livelong way
With solemn gibe did Eustace banter me.
"Now," said he, "will you climb the top of Art.
You cannot fail but work in hues to dim
The Titianic Flora. Will you match
My Juliet? you, not you,—the Master, Love,
A more ideal Artist he than all."
So home I went, but could not sleep for joy,
Reading her perfect features in the gloom,
Kissing the rose she gave me o'er and o'er,
And shaping faithful record of the glance
That graced the giving—such a noise of life
Swarmed in the golden present, such a voice
Called to me from the years to come, and such
A length of bright horizon rimmed the dark.
And all that night I heard the watchmen peal
The sliding season: all that night I heard
The heavy clocks knolling the drowsy hours.
The drowsy hours, dispensers of all good,
O'er the mute city stole with folded wings,
Distilling odors on me as they went
To greet their fairer sisters of the East.
Love at first sight, first-born and heir to all,
Made this night thus. Henceforward squall nor storm
Could keep me from that Eden where she dwelt.
Light pretexts drew me: sometimes a Dutch love
For tulips; then for roses, moss or musk,
To grace my city-rooms; or fruits and cream
Served in the weeping elm; and more and more

A word could bring the color to my cheek;
A thought would fill my eyes with happy dew;
Love trebled life within me, and with each
The year increased.
The daughters of the year,
One after one, through that still garden passed:
Each garlanded with her peculiar flower
Danced into light, and died into the shade;
And each in passing touched with some new grace
Or seemed to touch her, so that day by day,
Like one that never can be wholly known,
Her beauty grew; till Autumn brought an hour
For Eustace, when I heard his deep "I will,"
Breathed, like the covenant of a God, to hold
From thence through all the worlds: but I rose up
Full of his bliss, and following her dark eyes,
Felt earth as air beneath me, till I reached
The wicket-gate, and found her standing there.
There sat we down upon a garden mound,
Two mutually enfolded; Love, the third,
Between us, in the circle of his arms
Enwound us both; and over many a range
Of waning lime the gray cathedral towers,
Across a hazy glimmer of the west,
Revealed their shining windows: from them clashed
The bells; we listened; with the time we played;
We spoke of other things; we coursed about
The subject most at heart, more near and near,
Like doves about a dovecote, wheeling round
The central wish, until we settled there.
Then, in that time and place, I spoke to her,
Requiring, though I knew it was mine own,
Yet for the pleasure that I took to hear,
Requiring at her hand the greatest gift,
A woman's heart, the heart of her I loved;
And in that time and place she answered me,
And in the compass of three little words,
More musical than ever came in one,

The silver fragments of a broken voice,
Made me most happy, faltering "I am thine!"
Shall I cease here? Is this enough to say
That my desire, like all strongest hopes,
By its own energy fulfilled itself,
Merged in completion? Would you learn at full
How passion rose through circumstantial grades
Beyond all grades developed? and indeed
I had not stayed so long to tell you all,
But while I mused came Memory with sad eyes,
Holding the folded annals of my youth;
And while I mused, Love with knit brows went by,
And with a flying finger swept my lips,
And spake, "Be wise: not easily forgiven
Are those, who setting wide the doors, that bar
The secret bridal chambers of the heart,
Let in the day." Here, then, my words have end.
Yet might I tell of meetings, of farewells—
Of that which came between, more sweet than each,
In whispers, like the whispers of the leaves
That tremble round a nightingale—in sighs
Which perfect Joy, perplexed for utterance,
Stole from her sister Sorrow. Might I not tell
Of difference, reconcilement, pledges given,
And vows, where there was never need of vows,
And kisses, where the heart on one wild leap
Hung tranced from all pulsation, as above
The heavens between their fairy fleeces pale
Sowed all their mystic gulfs with fleeting stars;
Or while the balmy glooming, crescent-lit,
Spread the light haze along the river-shores,
And in the hollows; or as once we met
Unheedful, though beneath a whispering rain
Night slid down one long stream of sighing wind,
And in her bosom bore the baby, Sleep.
But this whole hour your eyes have been intent
On that veiled picture—veiled, for what it holds
May not be dwelt on by the common day.
This prelude has prepared thee. Raise thy soul,

Make thine heart ready with thine eyes: the time
Is come to raise the veil.
Behold her there,
As I beheld her ere she knew my heart,
My first, last love; the idol of my youth,
The darling of my manhood, and, alas!
Now the most blessed memory of mine age.

DORA.

With farmer Allan at the farm abode
William and Dora. William was his son,
And she his niece. He often looked at them,
And often thought "I'll make them man and wife."
Now Dora felt her uncle's will in all,
And yearned towards William; but the youth, because
He had been always with her in the house,
Thought not of Dora.
Then there came a day
When Allan called his son, and said: "My son,
I married late, but I would wish to see
My grandchild on my knees before I die:
And I have set my heart upon a match.
Now therefore look to Dora; she is well
To look to; thrifty too beyond her age.
She is my brother's daughter: he and I
Had once hard words, and parted, and he died
In foreign lands; but for his sake I bred
His daughter Dora: take her for your wife;
For I have wished this marriage, night and day,
For many years." But William answered short;
"I cannot marry Dora; by my life,
I will not marry Dora." Then the old man
Was wroth, and doubled up his hands, and said:
"You will not, boy! you dare to answer thus!
But in my time a father's word was law,

And so it shall be now for me. Look to't;
Consider, William: take a month to think,
And let me have an answer to my wish;
Or, by the Lord that made me, you shall pack,
And nevermore darken my doors again!"
But William answered madly; bit his lips,
And broke away. The more he looked at her
The less he liked her; and his ways were harsh;
But Dora bore them meekly. Then before
The month was out he left his father's house,
And hired himself to work within the fields;
And half in love, half spite, he wooed and wed
A laborer's daughter, Mary Morrison.

Then, when the bells were ringing, Allan called
His niece and said: "My girl, I love you well;
But if you speak with him that was my son,
Or change a word with her he calls his wife,
My home is none of yours. My will is law."
And Dora promised, being meek. She thought,
"It cannot be: my uncle's mind will change!"

And days went on, and there was born a boy
To William; then distresses came on him;
And day by day he passed his father's gate,
Heart-broken, and his father helped him not.
But Dora stored what little she could save,
And sent it them by stealth, nor did they know
Who sent it; till at last a fever seized
On William, and in harvest-time he died.

Then Dora went to Mary. Mary sat
And looked with tears upon her boy, and thought
Hard things of Dora. Dora came and said:
"I have obeyed my uncle until now,
And I have sinned, for it was all through me
This evil came on William at the first.
But, Mary, for the sake of him that's gone,
And for your sake, the woman that he chose,
And for this orphan, I am come to you:
You know there has not been for these five years
So full a harvest: let me take the boy,

And I will set him in my uncle's eye
Among the wheat; that when his heart is glad
Of the full harvest, he may see the boy,
And bless him for the sake of him that's gone."
And Dora took the child, and went her way
Across the wheat, and sat upon a mound
That was unsown, where many poppies grew.
Far off the farmer came into the field
And spied her not; for none of all his men
Dare tell him Dora waited with the child;
And Dora would have risen and gone to him,
But her heart failed her; and the reapers reaped,
And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.
But when the morrow came, she rose and took
The child once more, and sat upon the mound;
And made a little wreath of all the flowers
That grew about, and tied it round his hat
To make him pleasing in her uncle's eye.
Then when the farmer passed into the field
He spied her, and he left his men at work,
And came and said: "Where were you yesterday?
Whose child is that? What are you doing here?"
So Dora cast her eyes upon the ground,
And answered softly: "This is William's child!"
"And did I not," said Allan, "did I not
Forbid you, Dora?" Dora said again:
"Do with me as you will, but take the child
And bless him for the sake of him that's gone!"
And Allan said: "I see it is a trick
Got up betwixt you and the woman there.
I must be taught my duty, and by you!
You knew my word was law, and yet you dared
To slight it. Well—for I will take the boy;
But go you hence, and never see me more."
So saying, he took the boy, that cried aloud
And struggled hard. The wreath of flowers fell
At Dora's feet. She bowed upon her hands,
And the boy's cry came to her from the field,
More and more distant. She bowed down her head

Remembering the day when first she came,
And all the things that had been. She bowed down
And wept in secret; and the reapers reaped,
And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.
Then Dora went to Mary's house, and stood
Upon the threshold. Mary saw the boy
Was not with Dora. She broke out in praise
To God, that helped her in her widowhood.
And Dora said: "My uncle took the boy;
But, Mary, let me live and work with you:
He says that he will never see me more."
Then answered Mary: "This shall never be,
That thou shouldst take my trouble on thyself:
And, now I think, he shall not have the boy,
For he will teach him hardness, and to slight
His mother; therefore thou and I will go,
And I will have my boy, and bring him home;
And I will beg of him to take thee back;
But if he will not take thee back again,
Then thou and I will live within one house,
And work for William's child, until he grows
Of age to help us."
So the women kissed
Each other, and set out and reached the farm.
The door was off the latch; they peeped and saw
The boy set up betwixt his grandsire's knees,
Who thrust him in the hollows of his arm,
And clapt him on the hands and on the cheeks,
Like one that loved him: and the lad stretched out
And babbled for the golden seal, that hung
From Allan's watch, and sparkled by the fire.
Then they came in; but when the boy beheld
His mother, he cried out to come to her:
And Allan sat him down, and Mary said:
"O Father!—if you let me call you so—
I never came a-begging for myself,
Or William, or this child; but now I come
For Dora: take her back; she loves you well.
O Sir, when William died, he died at peace

With all men; for I asked him, and he said,
He could not ever rue his marrying me.—
I had been a patient wife: but, Sir, he said
That he was wrong to cross his father thus:
'God bless him!' he said, 'and may he never know
The troubles I have gone through!' Then he turned
His face and passed—unhappy that I am!
But now, Sir, let me have my boy, for you
Will make him hard, and he will learn to slight
His father's memory; and take Dora back,
And let all this be as it was before."
So Mary said, and Dora hid her face
By Mary. There was silence in the room;
And all at once the old man burst in sobs:—
"I have been to blame—to blame! I have killed
my son!
I have killed him—but I loved him—my dear son!
May God forgive me!—I have been to blame.
Kiss me, my children!"
Then they clung about
The old man's neck, and kissed him many times.
And all the man was broken with remorse;
And all his love came back a hundred fold;
And for three hours he sobbed o'er William's child,
Thinking of William.
So those four abode
Within one house together; and as years
Went forward, Mary took another mate;
But Dora lived unmarried till her death.

AUDLEY COURT.

"The Bull, the Fleece are crammed, and not a
room
For love or money. Let us picnic there
At Audley Court."
I spoke, while Audley feast

Hummed like a hive all round the narrow quay,
To Francis, with a basket on his arm,
To Francis just alighted from the boat,
And breathing of the sea. "With all my heart,"
Said Francis. Then we shouldered through the swarm
And rounded by the stillness of the beach
To where the bay runs up its latest horn.
We left the dying ebb that faintly lipped
The flat red granite; so by many a sweep
Of meadow smooth from aftermath we reached
The griffin-guarded gates, and passed through all
The pillared dusk of sounding sycamores,
And crossed the garden to the gardener's lodge,
With all its casements bedded, and its walls
And chimneys muffled in the leafy vine.
There, on a slope of orchard, Francis laid
A damask napkin wrought with horse and hound,
Brought out a dusky loaf that smelt of home,
And, half-cut-down, a pasty costly-made,
Where quail and pigeon, lark and leveret lay,
Like fossils of the rock, with golden yolks
Imbedded and injellied; last, with these,
A flask of cider from his father's vats,
Prime, which I knew; and so we sat and eat
And talked old matters over: who was dead,
Who married, who was like to be, and how
The races went, and who would rent the hall:
Then touched upon the game, how scarce it was
This season: glancing thence, discussed the farm,
The fourfield system and the price of grain;
And struck upon the corn-laws, where we split,
And came again together on the king
With heated faces; till he laughed aloud;
And, while the blackbird on the pippin hung
To hear him, clapt his hand in mine and sang—

"O! who would fight and march and countermarch,
Be shot for sixpence in a battle-field,

And shovelled up into a bloody trench
Where no one knows? but let me live my life.
"O! who would cast and balance at a desk,
Perched like a crow upon a three-legged stool,
Till all his juice is dried, and all his joints
Are full of chalk? but let me live my life.
"Who'd serve the state? for if I carved my name
Upon the cliffs that guard my native land,
I might as well have traced it in the sands;
The sea wastes all: but let me live my life.
"O! who would love? I wooed a woman once,
But she was sharper than an eastern wind,
And all my heart turned from her, as a thorn
Turns from the sea: but let me live my life."
He sang his song, and I replied with mine:
I found it in a volume, all of songs,
Knocked down to me, when old Sir Robert's pride,
His books—the more the pity, so I said—
Came to the hammer here in March—and this—
I set the words, and added names I knew.
"Sleep, Ellen Aubrey, sleep, and dream of me:
Sleep, Ellen, folded in thy sister's arm,
And sleeping, haply dream her arm is mine.
"Sleep, Ellen, folded in Emilia's arm;
Emilia, fairer than all else but thou,
For thou art fairer than all else that is.
"Sleep, breathing health and peace upon her breast:
Sleep, breathing love and trust against her lip:
I go to-night: I come to-morrow morn.
"I go, but I return: I would I were
The pilot of the darkness and the dream.
Sleep, Ellen Aubrey, love, and dream of me."
So sang we each to either, Francis Hale,
The farmer's son who lived across the bay,
My friend; and I, that having wherewithal,
And in the fallow leisure of my life
A rolling stone of here and everywhere,
Did what I would; but ere the night we rose
And sauntered home beneath a moon, that, just

In crescent, dimly rained about the leaf
Twilights of airy silver, till we reached
The limit of the hills; and as we sank
From rock to rock upon the glooming quay,
The town was hushed beneath us: lower down
The bay was oily calm; the harbor-buoy
With one green sparkle ever and anon
Dipt by itself, and we were glad at heart.

WALKING TO THE MAIL.

John. I'm glad I walked. How fresh the meadows look
Above the river, and, but a month ago,
The whole hill-side was redder than a fox.
Is yon plantation where this by-way joins
The turnpike?

James. Yes.

John. And when does this come by?

James. The mail? At one o'clock.

John. What is it now?

James. A quarter to.

John. Whose house is that I see
Beyond the watermills?

James. Sir Edward Head's:
But he's abroad: the place is to be sold.

John. O, his. He was not broken.

James. No sir, he,
Vexed with a morbid devil in his blood
That veiled the world with jaundice, hid his face
From all men, and commercing with himself,
He lost the sense that handles daily life—
That keeps us all in order more or less—
And sick of home, went overseas for change.

John. And whither?

James. Nay, who knows? he's here and there

But let him go; his devil goes with him,
As well as with his tenant, Jocky Dawes.

John. What's that?

James. You saw the man—on Monday, was it?
There by the humpbacked willow; half stands up
And bristles; half has fallen and made a bridge;
And there he caught the younker tickling trout—
Caught in *flagrante*—what's the Latin word?—
Delicto: but his house, for so they say,
Was haunted with a jolly ghost, that shook
The curtains, whined in lobbies, tapt at doors,
And rummaged like a rat: no servant stayed:
The farmer vext packs up his beds and chairs,
And all his household stuff; and with his boy
Betwixt his knees, his wife upon the tilt,
Sets out, and meets a friend who hails him, "What!
You're flitting!" "Yes, we're flitting," says the ghost,
(For they had packed the thing among the beds.)
"O well," says he, "you flitting with us too—
Jack, turn the horses' heads and home again."

John. He left *his* wife behind; for so I heard.

James. He left her, yes. I met my lady once:
A woman like a butt, and harsh as crabs.

John. O yet but I remember, ten years back—
'Tis now at least ten years—and then she was—
You could not light upon a sweeter thing:
A body slight and round, and like a pear
In growing, modest eyes, a hand, a foot
Lessening in perfect cadence, and a skin
As clean and white as privet when it flowers.

James. Ay, ay, the blossom fades, and they that loved
At first like dove and dove were cat and dog.
She was the daughter of a cottager,
Out of her sphere. What betwixt shame and pride,
New things and old, himself and her, she soured
To what she is: a nature never kind!
Like men, like manners: like breeds like, they say.
Kind nature is the best: those manners next

That fit us like a nature second-hand;
Which are indeed the manners of the great.
John. But I had heard it was this bill that past,
And fear of change at home, that drove him hence.
James. That was the last drop in the cup of gall.
I once was near him when his bailiff brought
A Chartist pike. You should have seen him wince
As from a venomous thing: he thought himself
A mark for all, and shuddered, lest a cry
Should break his sleep by night, and his nice eyes
Should see the raw mechanic's bloody thumbs
Sweat on his blazoned chairs; but, sir, you know
That these two parties still divide the world—
Of those that want, and those that have: and still
The same old sore breaks out from age to age
With much the same result. Now I myself,
A Tory to the quick, was as a boy
Destructive, when I had not what I would.
I was at school—a college in the South:
There lived a flayflint near; we stole his fruit,
His hens, his eggs; but there was law for *us;*
We paid in person. He had a sow, sir. She,
With meditative grunts of much content,
Lay great with pig, wallowing in sun and mud.
By night we dragged her to the college tower
From her warm bed, and up the corkscrew stair
With hand and rope we haled the groaning sow,
And on the leads we kept her till she pigged.
Large range of prospect had the mother sow,
And but for daily loss of one she loved,
As one by one we took them—but for this—
As never sow was higher in this world—
Might have been happy: but what lot is pure?
We took them all, till she was left alone
Upon her tower, the Niobe of swine,
And so returned unfarrowed to her sty.
John. They found you out?
James. Not they.
John. Well—after all—
What know we of the secret of a man?

His nerves were wrong. What ails us, who are sound,
That we should mimic this raw fool the world,
Which charts us all in its coarse blacks or whites,
As ruthless as a baby with a worm,
As cruel as a schoolboy ere he grows
To Pity—more from ignorance than will.
But put your best foot forward, or I fear
That we shall miss the mail: and here it comes
With five at top: as quaint a four-in-hand
As you shall see—three pyebalds and a roan.

ST. SIMEON STYLITES.

Although I be the basest of mankind,
From scalp to sole one slough and crust of sin,
Unfit for earth, unfit for heaven, scarce meet
For troops of devils, mad with blasphemy,
I will not cease to grasp the hope I hold
Of saintdom, and to clamor, mourn and sob,
Battering the gates of heaven with storms of prayer,
Have mercy, Lord, and take away my sin.
Let this avail, just, dreadful, mighty God,
This not be all in vain, that thrice ten years,
Thrice multiplied by superhuman pangs,
In hungers and in thirsts, fevers and cold,
In coughs, aches, stitches, ulcerous throes and cramps,
A sign betwixt the meadow and the cloud,
Patient on this tall pillar I have borne [snow;
Rain, wind, frost, heat, hail, damp, and sleet, and
And I had hoped that ere this period closed
Thou wouldst have caught me up into thy rest,
Denying not these weather-beaten limbs
The meed of saints, the white robe and the palm.
O take the meaning, Lord: I do not breathe,
Not whisper, any murmur of complaint.
Pain heaped ten-hundred-fold to this, were still

Less burthen, by ten-hundred-fold, to bear,
Than were those lead-like tons of sin, that crushed
My spirit flat before thee.
O Lord, Lord,
Thou knowest I bore this better at the first,
For I was strong and hale of body then;
And though my teeth, which now are dropt away,
Would chatter with the cold, and all my beard
Was tagged with icy fringes in the moon,
I drowned the whoopings of the owl with sound
Of pious hymns and psalms, and sometimes saw
An angel stand and watch me, as I sang.
Now am I feeble grown: my end draws nigh—
I hope my end draws nigh: half deaf I am,
So that I scarce can hear the people hum
About the column's base, and almost blind,
And scarce can recognize the fields I know.
And both my thighs are rotted with the dew,
Yet cease I not to clamor and to cry,
While my stiff spine can hold my weary head,
Till all my limbs drop piecemeal from the stone,
Have mercy, mercy: take away my sin.
O Jesus, if thou wilt not save my soul,
Who may be saved? who is it may be saved?
Who may be made a saint, if I fail here?
Show me the man hath suffered more than I.
For did not all thy martyrs die one death?
For either they were stoned, or crucified,
Or burned in fire, or boiled in oil, or sawn
In twain beneath the ribs; but I die here
To-day, and whole years long, a life of death.
Bear witness, if I could have found a way
(And heedfully I sifted all my thought)
More slowly-painful to subdue this home
Of sin, my flesh, which I despise and hate,
I had not stinted practice, oh my God!
For not alone this pillar-punishment,
Not this alone I bore: but while I lived
In the white convent down the valley there,

For many weeks about my loins I wore
The rope that haled the buckets from the well,
Twisted as tight as I could knot the noose;
And spake not of it to a single soul,
Until the ulcer, eating through my skin,
Betrayed my secret penance, so that all
My brethren marvelled greatly. More than this
I bore, whereof, oh God, thou knowest all.
Three winters, that my soul might grow to thee,
I lived up there on yonder mountain side.
My right leg chained into the crag, I lay
Pent in a roofless close of ragged stones;
Inswathed sometimes in wandering mist, and twice
Blacked with thy branding thunder, and sometimes
Sucking the damps for drink, and eating not,
Except the spare chance-gift of those that came
To touch my body and be healed, and live:
And they say then that I worked miracles,
Whereof my fame is loud amongst mankind,
Cured lameness, palsies, cancers. Thou, oh God,
Knowest alone whether this was or no.
Have mercy, mercy; cover all my sin!
Then, that I might be more alone with thee,
Three years I lived upon a pillar high
Six cubits, and three years on one of twelve;
And twice three years I crouched on one that rose
Twenty by measure; last of all, I grew
Twice ten long weary, weary years to this,
That numbers forty cubits from the soil.
I think that I have borne as much as this—
Or else I dream—and for so long a time,
If I may measure time by yon slow light,
And this high dial, which my sorrow crowns—
So much—even so.
And yet I know not well,
For that the evil ones come here, and say,
"Fall down, oh Simeon: thou hast suffered long
For ages and for ages!" Then they prate
Of penances I cannot have gone through,

Perplexing me with lies; and oft I fall,
Maybe for months, in such blind lethargies,
That Heaven, and Earth, and Time are choked.
But yet
Bethink thee, Lord, while thou and all the saints
Enjoy themselves in heaven, and men on earth
House in the shade of comfortable roofs,
Sit with their wives by fires, eat wholesome food,
And wear warm clothes, and even beasts have stalls
I, 'tween the spring and downfall of the light,
Bow down one thousand and two hundred times,
To Christ, the Virgin Mother, and the Saints;
Or in the night, after a little sleep,
I wake: the chill stars sparkle; I am wet
With drenching dews, or stiff with crackling frost.
I wear an undressed goatskin on my back;
A grazing iron collar grinds my neck;
And in my weak, lean arms I lift the cross,
And strive and wrestle with thee till I die:
O mercy, mercy! wash away my sin!
O Lord, thou knowest what a man I am;
A sinful man, conceived and born in sin;
'Tis their own doing; this is none of mine;
Lay it not to me. Am I to blame for this,
That here come those that worship me? Ha! ha!
They think that I am somewhat. What am I?
The silly people take me for a saint,
And bring me offerings of fruit and flowers;
And I, in truth (thou wilt bear witness here)
Have all in all endured as much, and more
Than many just and holy men, whose names
Are registered and calendered for saints.
Good people, you do ill to kneel to me.
What is it I can have done to merit this?
I am a sinner viler than you all.
It may be I have wrought some miracles,
And cured some halt and maimed; but what of that?
It may be, no one, even among the saints,
May match his pains with mine; but what of that?

Yet do not rise: for you may look on me,
And in your looking you may kneel to God.
Speak! is there any of you halt or maimed?
I think you know I have some power with Heaven
From my long penance: let him speak his wish.
Yes, I can heal him. Power goes forth from me.
They say that they are healed. Ah, hark! they shout
"St. Simeon Stylites." Why, if so,
God reaps a harvest in me. O my soul,
God reaps a harvest in thee. If this be,
Can I work miracles and not be saved?
This is not told of any. They were saints.
It cannot be but that I shall be saved;
Yea, crowned a saint. They shout, "Behold a saint!"
And lower voices saint me from above.
Courage, St. Simeon! This dull chrysalis
Cracks into shining wings, and hope ere death
Spreads more and more and more, that God hath now
Sponged and made blank of crimeful record all
My mortal archives.
O my sons, my sons,
I, Simeon of the pillar, by surname
Stylites, among men; I, Simeon,
The watcher on the column till the end;
I, Simeon, whose brain the sunshine bakes;
I, whose bald brows in silent hours become
Unnaturally hoar with rime, do now
From my high nest of penance here proclaim
That Pontius and Iscariot by my side
Showed like fair seraphs. On the coals I lay,
A vessel full of sin: all hell beneath
Made me boil over. Devils plucked my sleeve;
Abaddon and Asmodeus caught at me.
I smote them with the cross; they swarmed again.
In bed like monstrous apes they crushed my chest.
They flapped my light out as I read: I saw

Their faces grow between me and my book:
With colt-like whinny and with hoggish whine
They burst my prayer. Yet this way was left,
And by this way I 'scaped them. Mortify
Your flesh, like me, with scourges and with thorns;
Smite, shrink not, spare not. If it may be, fast
Whole Lents, and pray. I hardly, with slow steps—
With slow, faint steps, and much exceeding pain—
Have scrambled past those pits of fire, that still
Sing in mine ears. But yield not me the praise:
God only through his bounty hath thought fit,
Among the powers and princes of this world,
To make me an example to mankind,
Which few can reach to. Yet I do not say
But that a time may come—yea, even now,
Now, now, his footsteps smite the threshold stairs
Of life—I say, that time is at the doors
When you may worship me without reproach;
For I will leave my relics in your land,
And you may carve a shrine about my dust,
And burn a fragrant lamp before my bones,
When I am gathered to the glorious saints.
While I spake then, a sting of shrewdest pain
Ran shrivelling through me, and a cloudlike change,
In passing, with a grosser film made thick
These heavy, horny eyes. The end! the end!
Surely the end! What's here? a shape, a shade,
A flash of light. Is that the angel there
That holds a crown? Come, blessed brother, come
I know thy glittering face. I waited long;
My brows are ready. What! deny it now?
Nay, draw, draw, draw nigh. So I clutch it. Christ
It is gone: 'tis here again; the crown! the crown!
So now 'tis fitted on and grows to me,
And from it melt the dews of Paradise,
Sweet! sweet! spikenard, and balm, and frankincense.
Ah! let me not be fooled, sweet saints: I trust
That I am whole, and clean, and meet for Heaven.

Speak, if there be a priest, a man of God,
Among you there, and let him presently
Approach, and lean a ladder on the shaft,
And climbing up into my airy home,
Deliver me the blessed sacrament;
For by the warning of the Holy Ghost,
I prophesy that I shall die to-night,
A quarter before twelve.
But thou, oh Lord,
Aid all this foolish people; let them take
Example, pattern: lead them to thy light.

THE SEA-FAIRIES.

Slow sailed the weary mariners, and saw,
Betwixt the green brink and the running foam,
Sweet faces, rounded arms, and bosoms prest
To little harps of gold; and, while they mused,
Whispering to each other half in fear,
Shrill music reached them on the middle sea.

Whither away, whither away, whither away? fly
no more.
Whither away from the high green field, and the
happy blossoming shore?
Day and night to the billow the fountain calls;
Down shower the gambolling waterfalls
From wandering over the lea:
Out of the live-green heart of the dells
They freshen the silvery-crimson shells,
And thick with white bells the clover-hill swells
High over the full-toned sea:
O hither, come hither, and furl your sails,
Come hither to me and to me!
Hither, come hither, and frolic and play;
Here it is only the mew that wails;
We will sing to you all the day:

Mariner, mariner, furl your sails,
For here are the blissful downs and dales,
And merrily, merrily carol the gales,
And the spangle dances in bight and bay,
And the rainbow forms and flies on the land
Over the islands free;
And the rainbow lives in the curve of the sand;
Hither, come hither and see;
And the rainbow hangs on the poising wave,
And sweet is the color of cove and cave,
And sweet shall your welcome be;
O hither, come hither, and be our lords,
For merry brides are we!
We will kiss sweet kisses, and speak sweet words:
O listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten
With pleasure and love and jubilee!
O listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten
When the sharp, clear twang of the golden chords
Runs up the ridgéd sea!
Who can light on as happy a shore
All the world o'er, all the world o'er?
Whither away? listen and stay: mariner, mariner,
fly no more.

THE DESERTED HOUSE.

I.

Life and Thought have gone away
Side by side,
Leaving door and windows wide:
Careless tenants they!

II.

All within is dark as night:
In the windows is no light;
And no murmur at the door,
So frequent on its hinge before.

III.

Close the door, the shutters close,
Or through the windows we shall see
The nakedness and vacancy
Of the dark, deserted house.

IV.

Come away; no more of mirth
Is here or merry-making sound.
The house was builded of the earth,
And shall fall again to ground.

V.

Come away; for Life and Thought
Here no longer dwell;
But in a city glorious—
A great and distant city—have bought
A mansion incorruptible.
Would they could have stayed with us!

EDWIN MORRIS:

OR, THE LAKE.

O ME, my pleasant rambles by the lake,
My sweet, wild, fresh three quarters of a year,
My one Oasis in the dust and drouth
Of city life! I was a sketcher then;
See here, my doing: curves of mountain, bridge,
Boat, island, ruins of a castle, built
When men knew how to build, upon a rock,
With turrets lichen-gilded like a rock;
And here, new-comers in an ancient hold,
New-comers from the Mersey, millionaires,
Here lived the Hills,—a Tudor-chimneyed bulk
Of mellow brickwork on an isle of bowers.

O me! my pleasant rambles by the lake
With Edwin Morris and with Edward Bull,
The curate; he was fatter than his cure.

But Edwin Morris, he that knew the names,
Long learnèd names of agaric, moss and fern,
Who forged a thousand theories of the rocks,
Who taught me how to skate, to row, to swim,
Who read me rhymes elaborately good,
His own,—I called him Crichton, for he seemed
All-perfect, finished to the finger nail.

And once I asked him of his early life,
And his first passion; and he answered me;
And well his words became him: was he not
A full-celled honeycomb of eloquence
Stored from all flowers? Poet-like he spoke:

"My love for Nature is as old as I;
But thirty moons, one honeymoon to that,
And three rich sennights more, my love for her.
My love for Nature and my love for her,
Of different ages, like twin-sisters grew,
Twin-sisters differently beautiful.
To some full music rose and sank the sun,
And some full music seemed to move and change
With all the varied changes of the dark,
And either twilight and the day between;
For daily hope fulfilled, to rise again
Revolving toward fulfilment, made it sweet
To walk, to sit, to sleep, to wake, to breathe."

Or this or something like to this he spoke.
Then said the fat-faced curate, Edward Bull,
"I take it, God made the woman for the man,
And for the good and increase of the world.
A pretty face is well, and this is well,
To have a dame indoors that trims us up,
And keeps us tight; but these unreal ways

Seem but the theme of writers, and, indeed,
Worn threadbare. Man is made of solid stuff.
I say, God made the woman for the man,
And for the good and increase of the world."

"Parson," said I, "you pitch the pipe too low;
But I have sudden touches, and can run
My faith beyond my practice into his;
Though if, in dancing after Letty Hill,
I do not hear the bells upon my cap,
I scarce hear other music; yet say on.
What should one give to light on such a dream?"
I asked him half-sardonically.

"Give?
Give all thou art," he answered, and a light
Of laughter dimpled in his swarthy cheek;
"I would have hid her needle in my heart,
To save her little finger from a scratch
No deeper than the skin; my ears could hear
Her lightest breaths; her least remark was worth
The experience of the wise. I went and came;
Her voice fled always through the summer land;
I spoke her name alone. Thrice-happy days!
The flower of each, those moments when we met,
The crown of all, we met to part no more."

Were not his words delicious, I a beast
To take them as I did? but something jarred;
Whether he spoke too largely; that there seemed
A touch of something false, some self-conceit,
Or over-smoothness; howsoe'er it was,
He scarcely hit my humor, and I said:—

"Friend Edwin, do not think yourself alone
Of all men happy. Shall not Love to me,
As in the Latin song I learnt at school,
Sneeze out a full God-bless-you right and left?
But you can talk; yours is a kindly vein;

I have, I think,—Heaven knows,—as much within;
Have, or should have, but for a thought or two,
That, like a purple beech among the greens,
Looks out of place; 'tis from no want in her:
It is my shyness, or my self-distrust,
Or something of a wayward modern mind
Dissecting passion. Time will set me right."

So spoke I, knowing not the things that were.
Then said the fat-faced curate, Edward Bull:
"God made the woman for the use of man,
And for the good and increase of the world."
And I and Edwin laughed; and now we paused
About the windings of the marge to hear
The soft wind blowing over meadowy holms
And alders, garden-isles; and now we left
The clerk behind us, I and he, and ran
By ripply shallows of the lisping lake,
Delighted with the freshness and the sound.

But, when the bracken rusted on their crags,
My suit had withered, nipt to death by him
That was a God, and is a lawyer's clerk,
The rent-roll Cupid of our rainy isles.
'Tis true we met; one hour I had, no more,
She sent a note, the seal an *Elle vous suit*,
The close "Your Letty, only yours;" and this
Thrice underscored. The friendly mist of morn
Clung to the lake. I boated over, ran
My craft aground, and heard with beating heart
The Sweet-Gale rustle round the shelving keel;
And out I stept, and up I crept; she moved,
Like Proserpine in Enna, gathering flowers;
Then low and sweet I whistled thrice; and she,
She turned, we closed, we kissed, swore faith, I breathed
In some new planet; a silent cousin stole
Upon us and departed. "Leave," she cried,
"O leave me!" "Never, dearest, never; here

I brave the worst;" and while we stood like fools
Embracing, all at once a score of pugs
And poodles yelled within, and out they came,
Trustees and aunts and uncles. "What, with him!
"Go" (shrilled the cotton-spinning chorus), "him!'
I choked. Again they shrieked the burthen
"Him!"
Again with hands of wild rejection, "Go!—
Girl, get you in!" She went,—and in one month
They wedded her to sixty thousand pounds,
To lands in Kent and messuages in York,
And slight Sir Robert with his watery smile
And educated whisker. But for me,
They set an ancient creditor to work:
It seems I broke a close with force and arms;
There came a mystic token from the king
To greet the sheriff, needless courtesy!
I read, and fled by night, and flying turned;
Her taper glimmered in the lake below;
I turned once more, close-buttoned to the storm;
So left the place, left Edwin, nor have seen
Him since, nor heard of her, nor cared to hear.

Nor cared to hear? perhaps; yet long ago
I have pardoned little Letty; not indeed,
It may be, for her own dear sake, but this,
She seems a part of those fresh days to me;
For, in the dust and drouth of London life,
She moves among my visions of the lake,
While the prime swallow dips his wing, or then
While the gold-lily blows, and overhead
The light cloud smoulders on the summer crag.

TO ——,

AFTER READING A LIFE AND LETTERS.

"Cursed be he that moves my bones."
Shakspeare's Epitaph.

You might have won the Poet's name,
If such be worth the winning now,
And gained a laurel for your brow
Of sounder leaf than I can claim;

But you have made the wiser choice,
A life that moves to gracious ends
Through troops of unrecording friends,
A deedful life, a silent voice;

And you have missed the irreverent doom
Of those that wear the Poet's crown;
Hereafter neither knave nor clown
Shall hold their orgies at your tomb.

For now the Poet cannot die,
Nor leave his music as of old,
But round him, ere he scarce be cold,
Begins the scandal and the cry:

"Proclaim the faults he would not show;
Break lock and seal; betray the trust;
Keep nothing sacred; 'tis but just
The many-headed beast should know."

Ah, shameless! for he did but sing
A song that pleased us from its worth;
No public life was his on earth,
No blazoned statesman he, nor king.

He gave the people of his best;
His worst he kept, his best he gave.
My Shakspeare's curse on clown and knave
Who will not let his ashes rest!

Who make it seem more sweet to be
The little life of bank and brier,
The bird that pipes his lone desire
And dies unheard within his tree,

Than he that warbles long and loud
And drops at Glory's temple-gates,
For whom the carrion vulture waits
To tear his heart before the crowd!

TO E. L., ON HIS TRAVELS IN GREECE.

Illyrian woodlands, echoing falls
Of water, sheets of summer glass,
The long divine Peneïan pass,
The vast Akrokeraunian walls,

Tomohrit, Athos, all things fair,
With such a pencil, such a pen,
You shadow forth to distant men,
I read and felt that I was there:

And trust me while I turned the page,
And tracked you still on classic ground,
I grew in gladness till I found
My spirits in the golden age.

For me the torrent ever poured
And glistened,—here and there alone
The broad-limbed Gods at random thrown
By fountain-urns;—and Naiads oared

A glimmering shoulder under gloom
Of cavern pillars; on the swell
The silver lily heaved and fell;
And many a slope was rich in bloom,

From him that on the mountain lea
By dancing rivulets fed his flocks,
To him who sat upon the rocks,
And fluted to the morning sea.

"COME NOT, WHEN I AM DEAD."

Come not, when I am dead,
To drop thy foolish tears upon my grave,
To trample round my fallen head,
And vex the unhappy dust thou would'st not save.
There let the wind sweep and the plover cry;
But thou, go by.

Child, if it were thine error or thy crime,
I care no longer, being all unblest;
Wed whom thou wilt, but I am sick of Time,
And I desire to rest.
Pass on, weak heart, and leave me where I lie:
Go by, go by.

THE EAGLE.

A FRAGMENT.

He clasps the crag with hookéd hands;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ringed with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

THE TALKING OAK.

I.

Once more the gate behind me falls;
Once more before my face
I see the mouldered Abbey-walls,
That stand within the chace.

II.

Beyond the lodge the city lies,
Beneath its drift of smoke;
And ah! with what delighted eyes
I turn to yonder oak!

III.

For when my passion first began,
Ere that which in me burned,
The love that makes me thrice a man,
Could hope itself returned;

IV.

To yonder oak within the field
I spoke without restraint,
And with a larger faith appealed
Than Papist unto Saint.

V.

For oft I talked with him apart,
And told him of my choice,
Until he plagiarized a heart,
And answered with a voice.

VI.

Though what he whispered under Heaven
None else could understand;
I found him garrulously given,
A babbler in the land.

VII.

But since I heard him make reply
Is many a weary hour;
'Twere well to question him, and try
If yet he keeps the power.

VIII.

Hail, hidden to the knees in fern,
Broad oak of Sumner-chace,
Whose topmost branches can discern
The roofs of Sumner-place!

IX.

Say thou, whereon I carved her name,
If ever maid or spouse,
As fair as my Olivia, came
To rest beneath thy boughs?—

X.

"O Walter, I have sheltered here
Whatever maiden grace
The good old Summers, year by year,
Made ripe in Sumner-chace:

XI.

"Old Summers, when the monk was fat,
And, issuing shorn and sleek,
Would twist his girdle tight, and pat
The girls upon the cheek,

XII.

"Ere yet, in scorn of Peter's-pence,
And numbered bead, and shrift,
Bluff Harry broke into the spence,
And turned the cowls adrift:

XIII.

"And I have seen some score of those
Fresh faces, that would thrive

When his man-minded offset rose
To chase the deer at five;

XIV.

"And all that from the town would stroll,
Till that wild wind made work,
In which the gloomy brewer's soul
Went by me, like a stork:

XV.

"The slight she-slips of loyal blood,
And others, passing praise,
Strait-laced, but all-too-full in bud
For puritanic stays:

XVI.

"And I have shadowed many a group
Of beauties, that were born
In teacup-times of hood and hoop,
Or while the patch was worn;

XVII.

"And, leg and arm with love-knots gay,
About me leaped and laughed
The modish Cupid of the day,
And shrilled his tinsel shaft.

XVIII.

"I swear (and else may insects prick
Each leaf into a gall)
This girl, for whom your heart is sick,
Is three times worth them all;

XIX.

"For those and theirs, by Nature's law,
Have faded long ago;
But in these latter springs I saw
Your own Olivia blow,

XX.

"From when she gambolled on the greens,
A baby-germ, to when
The maiden blossoms of her teens
Could number five from ten.

XXI.

"I swear, by leaf, and wind, and rain,
(And hear me with thine ears,)
That, though I circle in the grain
Five hundred rings of years—

XXII.

"Yet, since I first could cast a shade,
Did never creature pass
So slightly, musically made,
So light upon the grass:

XXIII.

"For as to fairies, that will flit
To make the greensward fresh,
I hold them exquisitely knit,
But far too spare of flesh."

XXIV.

O, hide thy knotted knees in fern,
And overlook the chace;
And from thy topmost branch discern
The roofs of Sumner-place.

XXV.

But thou, whereon I carved her name,
That oft hast heard my vows,
Declare when last Olivia came
To sport beneath thy boughs.

XXVI.

"O yesterday, you know, the fair
Was holden at the town;

Her father left his good arm-chair,
And rode his hunter down.

XXVII.

"And with him Albert came on his.
I looked at him with joy:
As cowslip unto oxlip is,
So seems she to the boy.

XXVIII.

An hour had past—and, sitting straight
Within the low-wheeled chaise,
Her mother trundled to the gate
Behind the dappled grays.

XXIX.

"But, as for her, she stayed at home,
And on the roof she went,
And down the way you use to come
She looked with discontent.

XXX.

"She left the novel half-uncut
Upon the rosewood shelf;
She left the new piano shut:
She could not please herself.

XXXI.

"Then ran she, gamesome as the colt,
And livelier than a lark
She sent her voice through all the holt
Before her, and the park.

XXXII.

"A light wind chased her on the wing,
And in the chase grew wild,
As close as might be would he cling
About the darling child:

XXXIII.

"But light as any wind that blows
So fleetly did she stir,
The flower, she touched on, dipt and rose,
And turned to look at her.

XXXIV.

"And here she came, and round me played,
And sang to me the whole
Of those three stanzas that you made
About my 'giant bole;'

XXXV.

"And in a fit of frolic mirth
She strove to span my waist:
Alas, I was so broad of girth,
I could not be embraced.

XXXVI.

"I wished myself the fair young beech
That here beside me stands,
That round me, clasping each in each,
She might have locked her hands.

XXXVII.

"Yet seemed the pressure thrice as sweet
As woodbine's fragile hold,
Or when I feel about my feet
The berried briony fold."

XXXVIII.

O muffle round thy knees with fern,
And shadow Sumner-chace!
Long may thy topmost branch discern
The roofs of Sumner-place!

XXXIX.

But tell me, did she read the name
I carved with many vows,

When last with throbbing heart I came
To rest beneath thy boughs?

XL.

"O yes, she wandered round and round
These knotted knees of mine,
And found, and kissed the name she found,
And sweetly murmured thine.

XLI.

"A tear-drop trembled from its source,
And down my surface crept.
My sense of touch is something coarse,
But I believe she wept.

XLII.

"Then flushed her cheek with rosy light,
She glanced across the plain;
But not a creature was in sight:
She kissed me once again.

XLIII.

"Her kisses were so close and kind,
That, trust me on my word,
Hard wood I am, and wrinkled rind,
But yet my sap was stirred:

XLIV.

"And even into my inmost ring
A pleasure I discerned,
Like those blind motions of the Spring,
That show the year is turned.

XLV.

"Thrice-happy he that may caress
The ringlet's waving balm—
The cushions of whose touch may press
The maiden's tender palm.

XLVI.

"I, rooted here among the groves,
But languidly adjust
My vapid vegetable loves
With anthers and with dust:

XLVII.

"For ah! my friend, the days were brief
Whereof the poets talk,
When that, which breathes within the leaf,
Could slip its bark and walk.

XLVIII.

"But could I, as in times foregone,
From spray, and branch, and stem,
Have sucked and gathered into one
The life that spreads in them,

XLIX.

"She had not found me so remiss;
But lightly issuing through,
I would have paid her kiss for kiss
With usury thereto."

L.

O flourish high, with leafy towers,
And overlook the lea,
Pursue thy loves among the bowers,
But leave thou mine to me.

LI.

O flourish, hidden deep in fern,
Old oak, I love thee well;
A thousand thanks for what I learn
And what remains to tell.

LII.

"'Tis little more: the day was warm;
At last, tired out with play,

She sank her head upon her arm,
And at my feet she lay.

LIII.

"Her eyelids dropped their silken eaves.
I breathed upon her eyes
Through all the summer of my leaves
A welcome mixed with sighs.

LIV.

"I took the swarming sound of life—
The music from the town—
The murmurs of the drum and fife,
And lulled them in my own.

LV.

"Sometimes I let a sunbeam slip,
To light her shaded eye;
A second fluttered round her lip
Like a golden butterfly;

LVI.

"A third would glimmer on her neck
To make the necklace shine;
Another slid, a sunny fleck,
From head to ankle fine.

LVII.

"Then close and dark my arms I spread,
And shadowed all her rest—
Dropt dews upon her golden head,
An acorn in her breast.

LVIII.

"But in a pet she started up,
And plucked it out, and drew
My little oakling from the cup,
And flung him in the dew.

LIX.

"And yet it was a graceful gift—
I felt a pang within
As when I see the woodman lift
His axe to slay my kin.

LX.

"I shook him down because he was
The finest on the tree.
He lies beside thee on the grass.
O kiss him once for me!

LXI.

"O kiss him twice and thrice for me,
That have no lips to kiss,
For never yet was oak on lea
Shall grow so fair as this."

LXII.

Step deeper yet in herb and fern,
Look further through the chace,
Spread upward till thy boughs discern
The front of Sumner-place.

LXIII.

This fruit of thine by Love is blest,
That but a moment lay
Where fairer fruit of Love may rest
Some happy future day.

LXIV.

I kiss it twice, I kiss it thrice,
The warmth it thence shall win
To riper life may magnetize
The baby-oak within.

LXV.

But thou, while kingdoms overset,
Or lapse from hand to hand,

Thy leaf shall never fail, nor yet
Thine acorn in the land.

LXVI.

May never saw dismember thee,
Nor wielded axe disjoint;
That art the fairest spoken tree
From here to Lizard-point.

LXVII.

O rock upon thy towery top
All throats that gurgle sweet!
All starry culmination drop
Balm-dews to bathe thy feet!

LXVIII.

All grass of silky feather grow—
And while he sinks or swells
The full south-breeze around thee blow
The sound of minster bells.

LXIX.

The fat earth feed thy branchy root,
That under deeply strikes!
The northern morning o'er thee shoot,
High up, in silver spikes!

LXX.

Nor ever lightning char thy grain,
But, rolling as in sleep,
Low thunders bring the mellow rain,
That makes thee broad and deep!

LXXI.

And hear me swear a solemn oath,
That only by thy side
Will I to Olive plight my troth,
And gain her for my bride.

LXXII.

And when my marriage-morn may fall,
She, Dryad-like, shall wear
Alternate leaf and acorn-ball
In wreath about her hair.

LXXIII.

And I will work in prose and rhyme,
And praise thee more in both
Than bard has honored beech or lime,
Or that Thessalian growth

LXXIV.

In which the swarthy ringdove sat,
And mystic sentence spoke;
And more than England honors that,
Thy famous brother-oak,

LXXV.

Wherein the younger Charles abode
Till all the paths were dim,
And far below the Roundhead rode,
And hummed a surly hymn.

LOVE AND DUTY.

Or love that never found his earthly close,
What sequel? Streaming eyes and breaking hearts?
Or all the same as if he had not been?
Not so. Shall Error in the round of time
Still father Truth? O, shall the braggart shout
For some blind glimpse of freedom work itself
Through madness, hated by the wise, to law
System and empire? Sin itself be found
The cloudy porch oft opening on the Sun?
And only he, this wonder, dead, become

Mere highway dust? or year by year alone
Sit brooding in the ruins of a life,
Nightmare of youth, the spectre of himself?
If this were thus, if this, indeed, were all,
Better the narrow brain, the stony heart,
The staring eye glazed o'er with sapless days,
The long mechanic pacings to and fro,
The set gray life, and apathetic end.
But am I not the nobler through thy love?
O three times less unworthy! likewise thou
Art more through Love, and greater than thy years.
The Sun will run his orbit, and the Moon
Her circle. Wait, and Love himself will bring
The drooping flower of knowledge changed to fruit
Of wisdom. Wait: my faith is large in Time,
And that which shapes it to some perfect end.
Will some one say, then why not ill for good?
Why took ye not your pastime? To that man
My work shall answer, since I knew the right
And did it; for a man is not as God,
But then most Godlike being most a man.
—So let me think 'tis well for thee and me—
Ill-fated that I am, what lot is mine
Whose foresight preaches peace, my heart so slow
To feel it! For how hard it seemed to me,
When eyes, love-languid through half-tears, would dwell
One earnest, earnest moment upon mine,
Then not to dare to see! when thy low voice,
Faltering, would break its syllables, to keep
My own full-tuned,—hold passion in a leash,
And not leap forth and fall about thy neck,
And on thy bosom, (deep-desired relief!)
Rain out the heavy mist of tears, that weighed
Upon my brain, my senses and my soul!
For Love himself took part against himself
To warn us off, and Duty loved of Love—
O this world's curse—beloved but hated—came
Like Death betwixt thy dear embrace and mine,

And crying, "Who is this? behold thy bride,"
She pushed me from thee.
If the sense is hard
To alien ears, I did not speak to these—
No, not to thee, but to thyself in me:
Hard is my doom and thine: thou knowest it all.
Could love part thus? was it not well to speak,
To have spoken once? It could not but be well.
The slow sweet hours that bring us all things good,
The slow sad hours that bring us all things ill,
And all good things from evil, brought the night
In which we sat together and alone,
And to the want, that hollowed all the heart,
Gave utterance by the yearning of an eye,
That burned upon its object through such tears
As flow but once a life.
The trance gave way
To those caresses, when a hundred times
In that last kiss, which never was the last,
Farewell, like endless welcome, lived and died.
Then followed counsel, comfort, and the words
That make a man feel strong in speaking truth;
Till now the dark was worn, and overhead
The lights of sunset and of sunrise mixed
In that brief night; the summer night, that paused
Among her stars to hear us; stars that hung
Love-charmed to listen: all the wheels of Time
Spun round in station, but the end had come.
O then like those, who clench their nerves to
rush
Upon their dissolution, we two rose,
There—closing like an individual life—
In one blind cry of passion and of pain,
Like bitter accusation even to death,
Caught up the whole of love and uttered it,
And bade adieu forever.
Live—yet live—
Shall sharpest pathos blight us, knowing all
Life needs for life is possible to will—

Live happy; tend thy flowers; be tended by
My blessing! Should my Shadow cross thy thoughts
Too sadly for thy peace, remand it thou
For calmer hours to Memory's darkest hold,
If not to be forgotten—not at once—
Not all forgotten. Should it cross thy dreams,
O might it come like one that looks content,
With quiet eyes unfaithful to the truth,
And point thee forward to a distant light,
Or seem to lift a burthen from thy heart
And leave thee freer, till thou wake refreshed,
Then when the first low matin-chirp hath grown
Full quire, and morning driven her plow of pearl
Far furrowing into light the mounded rack,
Beyond the fair green field and eastern sea.

THE GOLDEN YEAR.

Well, you shall have that song which Leonard
It was last summer on a tour in Wales: [wrote:
Old James was with me: we that day had been
Up Snowdon; and I wished for Leonard there,
And found him in Llanberis: then we crost
Between the lakes, and clambered half way up
The counter side; and that same song of his
He told me; for I bantered him, and swore
They said he lived shut up within himself,
A tongue-tied Poet in the feverous days,
That, setting the *how much* before the *how*,
Cry, like the daughters of the horse-leech, "give,
Cram us with all," but count not me the herd!

To which, "They call me what they will," he said:
"But I was born too late: the fair new forms,
That float about the threshold of an age,
Like truths of Science waiting to be caught—
Catch me who can, and make the catcher crowned—
Are taken by the forelock. Let it be.

But if you care indeed to listen, hear
These measured words, my work of yestermorn.
"We sleep and wake and sleep, but all things move;
The Sun flies forward to his brother Sun;
The dark Earth follows wheeled in her ellipse:
And human things returning on themselves
Move onward, leading up the golden year.
"Ah, though the times when some new thought can bud
Are but as poets' seasons when they flower,
Yet seas that daily gain upon the shore
Have ebb and flow conditioning their march,
And slow and sure comes up the golden year.
"When wealth no more shall rest in mounded heaps,
But smit with freer light shall slowly melt
In many streams to fatten lower lands,
And light shall spread, and man be liker man
Through all the season of the golden year.
"Shall eagles not be eagles? wrens be wrens?
If all the world were falcons, what of that?
The wonder of the eagle were the less,
But he not less the eagle. Happy days
Roll onward, leading up the golden year.
"Fly, happy, happy sails, and bear the Press;
Fly happy with the mission of the Cross;
Knit land to land, and blowing havenward.
With silks, and fruits, and spices, clear of toll,
Enrich the markets of the golden year.
"But we grow old. Ah! when shall all men's good
Be each man's rule, and universal Peace
Lie like a shaft of light across the land,
And like a lane of beams athwart the sea,
Through all the circle of the golden year?"
Thus far he flowed, and ended; whereupon
"Ah, folly!" in mimic cadence answered James—
"Ah, folly! for it lies so far away,

Not in our time, nor in our children's time,
'Tis like the second world to us that live,
'Twere all as one to fix our hopes on Heaven
As on this vision of the golden year."
With that he struck his staff against the rocks
And broke it,—James,—you know him,—old, but full
Of force and choler, and firm upon his feet,
And like an oaken stock in winter woods,
O'erflourished with the hoary clematis:
Then added, all in heat:
"What stuff is this?
Old writers pushed the happy season back,—
The more fools they,—we forward: dreamers both:
You most, that in an age, when every hour
Must sweat her sixty minutes to the death,
Live on, God love us, as if the seedsman, rapt
Upon the teeming harvest, should not dip
His hand into the bag: but well I know
That unto him who works, and feels he works,
This same grand year is ever at the doors."
He spoke; and, high above, I heard them blast
The steep slate-quarry, and the great echo flap
And buffet round the hills from bluff to bluff.

ULYSSES.

It little profits that an idle king,
By this still hearth, among these barren crags,
Matched with an aged wife, I mete and dole
Unequal laws unto a savage race,
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.
I cannot rest from travel: I will drink
Life to the lees: all times I have enjoyed
Greatly, have suffered greatly, both with those
That loved me, and alone; on shore, and when
Through scudding drifts the rainy Hyades

Vext the dim sea: I am become a name;
For always roaming with a hungry heart
Much have I seen and known; cities of men
And manners, climates, councils, governments,
Myself not least, but honored of them all;
And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.
I am a part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch wherethrough
Gleams that untravelled world, whose margin fades
Forever and forever when I move.
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnished, not to shine in use!
As though to breathe were life. Life piled on life
Were all too little, and of one to me
Little remains: but every hour is saved
From that eternal silence, something more,
A bringer of new things; and vile it were
For some three suns to store and hoard myself,
And this gray spirit yearning in desire
To follow knowledge, like a sinking star,
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.
  This is my son, mine own Telemachus,
To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle—
Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil
This labor, by slow prudence to make mild
A rugged people, and through soft degrees
Subdue them to the useful and the good.
Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere
Of common duties, decent not to fail
In offices of tenderness, and pay
Meet adoration to my household gods
When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.
  There lies the port: the vessel puffs her sail:
There gloom the dark broad seas. My mariners,
Souls that have toiled, and wrought, and thought
with me—
That ever with a frolic welcome took
The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed

Free hearts, free foreheads—you and I are old;
Old age hath yet his honor and his toil;
Death closes all: but something ere the end,
Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.
The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks:
The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs: the deep
Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.
Though much is taken, much abides; and though
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven; that which we are, we are;
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

LOCKSLEY HALL.

Comrades, leave me here a little, while as yet 'tis early morn:
Leave me here, and when you want me, sound upon the bugle-horn.

'Tis the place, and all around it, as of old, the curlews call.
Dreary gleams about the moorland flying over Locksley Hall;

Locksley Hall, that in the distance overlooks the sandy tracts,
And the hollow ocean-ridges roaring into cataracts.

Many a night from yonder ivied casement, ere I went to rest,
Did I look on great Orion sloping slowly to the West.

Many a night I saw the Pleiads, rising through the mellow shade,
Glitter like a swarm of fire-flies tangled in a silver braid.

Here about the beach I wandered, nourishing a youth sublime
With the fairy tales of science, and the long result of Time;

When the centuries behind me like a fruitful land reposed;
When I clung to all the present for the promise that it closed:

When I dipt into the future far as human eye could see;
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be.——

In the Spring a fuller crimson comes upon the Robin's breast;
In the Spring the wanton lapwing gets himself another crest;

In the Spring a livelier iris changes on the burnished dove;
In the Spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love.

Then her cheek was pale and thinner than should
be for one so young,
And her eyes on all my motions with a mute ob-
servance hung.

And I said, "My cousin Amy, speak, and speak the
truth to me,
Trust me, cousin, all the current of my being sets
to thee."

On her pallid cheek and forehead came a color and
a light,
As I have seen the rosy red flushing in the northern
night.

And she turned—her bosom shaken with a sudden
storm of sighs—
All the spirit deeply dawning in the dark of hazel
eyes—

Saying, "I have hid my feelings, fearing they should
do me wrong;"
Saying, "Dost thou love me, cousin?" weeping, "I
have loved thee long."

Love took up the glass of Time, and turned it in
his glowing hands;
Every moment, lightly shaken, ran itself in golden
sands.

Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on all the
chords with might;
Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling, passed in
music out of sight.

Many a morning on the moorland did we hear the
copses ring,
And her whisper thronged my pulses with the ful-
ness of the Spring.

Many an evening by the waters did we watch the stately ships,
And our spirits rushed together at the touching of the lips.

O my cousin, shallow-hearted! O my Amy, mine no more!
O the dreary, dreary moorland! O the barren, barren shore!

Falser than all fancy fathoms, falser than all songs have sung,
Puppet to a father's threat, and servile to a shrewish tongue!

Is it well to wish thee happy?—having known me—to decline
On a range of lower feelings and a narrower heart than mine!

Yet it shall be: thou shalt lower to his level day by day,
What is fine within thee growing coarse to sympathize with clay.

As the husband is, the wife is; thou art mated with a clown,
And the grossness of his nature will have weight to drag thee down.

He will hold thee, when his passion shall have spent its novel force,
Something better than his dog, a little dearer than his horse.

What is this? his eyes are heavy: think not they are glazed with wine.
Go to him: it is thy duty: kiss him: take his hand in thine.

It may be my lord is weary, that his brain is over-
wrought:
Soothe him with thy finer fancies, touch him with
thy lighter thought.

He will answer to the purpose, easy things to under-
stand—
Better thou wert dead before me, though I slew
thee with my hand!

Better thou and I were lying, hidden from the
heart's disgrace,
Rolled in one another's arms, and silent in a last
embrace.

Cursed be the social wants that sin against the
strength of youth!
Cursed be the social lies that warp us from the living
truth!

Cursed be the sickly forms that err from honest
Nature's rule!
Cursed be the gold that gilds the straitened forehead
of the fool!

Well,—'tis well that I should bluster!—Hadst thou
less unworthy proved—
Would to God—for I had loved thee more than ever
wife was loved.

Am I mad, that I should cherish that which bears
but bitter fruit?
I will pluck it from my bosom, though my heart be
at the root.

Never, though my mortal summers to such length
of years should come
As the many-wintered crow that leads the clanging
rookery home.

Where is comfort? in division of the records of the mind?
Can I part her from herself, and love her, as I knew her, kind?

I remember one that perished: sweetly did she speak and move:
Such a one do I remember, whom to look at was to love.

Can I think of her as dead, and love her for the love she bore?
No—she never loved me truly: love is love forevermore.

Comfort? comfort scorned of devils! this is truth the poet sings,
That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things.

Drug thy memories, lest thou learn it, lest thy heart be put to proof,
In the dead, unhappy night, and when the rain is on the roof.

Like a dog, he hunts in dreams, and thou art staring at the wall,
Where the dying night-lamp flickers, and the shadows rise and fall.

Then a hand shall pass before thee, pointing to his drunken sleep,
To thy widowed marriage-pillows, to the tears that thou wilt weep.

Thou shalt hear the "Never, never," whispered by the phantom years,
And a song from out the distance in the ringing of thine ears

And an eye shall vex thee, looking ancient kindness
on thy pain.
Turn thee, turn thee on thy pillow; get thee to thy
rest again.

Nay, but Nature brings thee solace; for a tender
voice will cry.
'Tis a purer life than thine; a lip to drain thy
trouble dry.

Baby lips will laugh me down: my latest rival
brings thee rest.
Baby fingers, waxen touches, press me from the
mother's breast.

O, the child too clothes the father with a dearness
not his due.
Half is thine and half is his: it will be worthy of
the two.

O, I see thee old and formal, fitted to thy petty
part,
With a little hoard of maxims preaching down a
daughter's heart.

"They were dangerous guides the feelings—she
herself was not exempt—
Truly, she herself had suffered"—Perish in thy
self-contempt!

Overlive it—lower yet—be happy! wherefore should
I care?
I myself must mix with action, lest I wither by
despair.

What is that which I should turn to, lighting upon
days like these?
Every door is barred with gold, and opens but to
golden keys.

Every gate is thronged with suitors, all the markets overflow.
I have but an angry fancy: what is that which I should do?

I had been content to perish, falling on the foeman's ground,
When the ranks are rolled in vapor, and the winds are laid with sound.

But the jingling of the guinea helps the hurt that Honor feels,
And the nations do but murmur, snarling at each other's heels.

Can I but relive in sadness? I will turn that earlier page.
Hide me from my deep emotion, oh thou wondrous Mother-Age!

Make me feel the wild pulsation that I felt before the strife,
When I heard my days before me, and the tumult of my life;

Yearning for the large excitement that the coming years would yield,
Eager-hearted as a boy when first he leaves his father's field,

And at night along the dusky highway near and nearer drawn,
Sees in heaven the light of London flaring like a dreary dawn;

And his spirit leaps within him to be gone before him then,
Underneath the light he looks at, in among the throngs of men;

Men, my brothers, men the workers, ever reaping something new:
That which they have done but earnest of the things that they shall do:

For I dipt into the future, far as human eye could see,
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be;

Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies of magic sails,
Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down with costly bales;

Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and there rained a ghastly dew
From the nations' airy navies grappling in the central blue;

Far along the world-wide whisper of the south-wind rushing warm,
With the standards of the peoples plunging through the thunder-storm;

Till the war-drum throbbed no longer, and the battle-flags were furled
In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world;

There the common sense of most shall hold a fretful realm in awe,
And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapt in universal law.

So I triumphed, ere my passion sweeping through me left me dry,
Left me with the palsied heart, and left me with the jaundiced eye;

Eye, to which all order festers, all things here are
out of joint,
Science moves, but slowly, slowly, creeping on from
point to point:

Slowly comes a hungry people, as a lion, creeping
nigher,
Glares at one that nods and winks behind a slowly-
dying fire.

Yet I doubt not through the ages one increasing
purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widened with the
process of the suns.

What is that to him that reaps not harvest of his
youthful joys,
Though the deep heart of existence beat forever
like a boy's?

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and I linger
on the shore,
And the individual withers, and the world is more
and more.

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and he bears
a laden breast,
Full of sad experience moving toward the stillness
of his rest.

Hark, my merry comrades call me, sounding on the
bugle-horn,
They to whom my foolish passion were a target for
their scorn:

Shall it not be scorn to me to harp on such a
mouldered string?
I am shamed through all my nature to have loved
so slight a thing.

Weakness to be wroth with weakness! woman's pleasure, woman's pain—
Nature made them blinder motions bounded in a shallower brain:

Woman is the lesser man, and all thy passions, matched with mine,
Are as moonlight unto sunlight, and as water unto wine—

Here at least, where nature sickens, nothing. Ah, for some retreat
Deep in yonder shining Orient, where my life began to beat;

Where in wild Mahratta-battle fell my father evil-starred;
I was left a trampled orphan, and a selfish uncle's ward.

Or to burst all links of habit—there to wander far away,
On from island unto island at the gateways of the day.

Larger constellations burning, mellow moons and happy skies,
Breadths of tropic shade and palms in cluster, knots of Paradise.

Never comes the trader, never floats an European flag,
Slides the bird o'er lustrous woodland, swings the trailer from the crag;

Droops the heavy-blossomed bower, hangs the heavy-fruited tree—
Summer isles of Eden lying in dark-purple spheres of sea.

There methinks would be enjoyment more than in
this march of mind,
In the steamship, in the railway, in the thoughts
that shake mankind.

There the passions, cramped no longer, shall have
scope and breathing-space;
I will take some savage woman, she shall rear my
dusky race.

Iron-jointed, supple-sinewed, they shall dive, and
they shall run,
Catch the wild goat by the hair, and hurl their
lances in the sun;

Whistle back the parrot's call, and leap the rain-
bows of the brooks,
Not with blinded eyesight poring over miserable
books—

Fool, again the dream, the fancy! but I *know* my
words are wild,
But I count the gray barbarian lower than the
Christian child.

I, to herd with narrow foreheads, vacant of our
glorious gains,
Like a beast with lower pleasures, like a beast with
lower pains!

Mated with a squalid savage—what to me were sun
or clime?
I the heir of all the ages, in the foremost files of
time—

I that rather held it better men should perish one
by one,
Than that earth should stand at gaze like Joshua's
moon in Ajalon!

Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward, forward let us range.
Let the great world spin forever down the ringing grooves of change.

Through the shadow of the globe we sweep into the younger day:
Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay.

Mother-age, (for mine I knew not,) help me as when life begun:
Rift the hills, and roll the waters, flash the lightnings, weigh the Sun—

O, I see the crescent promise of my spirit hath not set.
Ancient founts of inspiration well through all my fancy yet.

Howsoever these things be, a long farewell to Locksley Hall!
Now for me the woods may wither, now for me the roof-tree fall.

Comes a vapor from the margin, blackening over heath and holt,
Cramming all the blast before it, in its breast a thunderbolt.

Let it fall on Locksley Hall, with rain or hail, or fire or snow;
For the mighty wind arises, roaring seaward, and I go.

GODIVA.

I waited for the train at Coventry;
I hung with grooms and porters on the bridge,

To watch the three tall spires ; and there I shaped
The city's ancient legend into this :—
Not only we, the latest seed of Time,
New men, that in the flying of a wheel
Cry down the past, not only we, that prate
Of rights and wrongs, have loved the people well,
And loathed to see them overtaxed ; but she
Did more, and underwent, and overcame,
The woman of a thousand summers back,
Godiva, wife to that grim Earl, who ruled
In Coventry : for when he laid a tax
Upon his town, and all the mothers brought
Their children, clamoring, "If we pay, we starve!"
She sought her lord, and found him, where he strode
About the hall, among his dogs, alone,
His beard a foot before him, and his hair
A yard behind. She told him of their tears,
And prayed him, "If they pay this tax, they starve."
Whereat he stared, replying half-amazed,
"You would not let your little finger ache
For such as *these?*"—"But I would die," said she.
He laughed, and swore by Peter and by Paul:
Then filliped at the diamond in her ear;
"O ay, ay, ay, you talk!"—"Alas!" she said,
"But prove me what it is I would not do."
And from a heart as rough as Esau's hand,
He answered, "Ride you naked through the town,
And I repeal it;" and nodding, as in scorn,
He parted, with great strides among his dogs.
So left alone, the passions of her mind,
As winds from all the compass shift and blow,
Made war upon each other for an hour,
Till pity won. She sent a herald forth,
And bade him cry, with sound of trumpet, all
The hard condition; but that she would loose
The people: therefore, as they loved her well,
From then till noon no foot should pace the street,
No eye look down, she passing; but that all
Should keep within, door shut, and window barred.

Then fled she to her inmost bower, and there
Unclasped the wedded eagles of her belt,
The grim Earl's gift; but ever at a breath
She lingered, looking like a summer moon
Half-dipt in cloud: anon she shook her head,
And showered the rippled ringlets to her knee;
Unclad herself in haste; adown the stair
Stole on; and, like a creeping sunbeam, slid
From pillar unto pillar, until she reached
The gateway; there she found her palfrey trapt
In purple blazoned with armorial gold.

Then she rode forth, clothed on with chastity:
The deep air listened round her as she rode,
And all the low wind hardly breathed for fear.
The little wide-mouthed heads upon the spout
Had cunning eyes to see: the barking cur
Made her cheek flame: her palfrey's footfall shot
Light horrors through her pulses: the blind walls
Were full of chinks and holes; and overhead
Fantastic gables, crowding, stared: but she
Not less through all bore up, till, last, she saw
The white-flowered elder thicket from the field
Gleam through the Gothic archways in the wall.

Then she rode back, clothed on with chastity.
And one low churl, compact of thankless earth,
The fatal byword of all years to come,
Boring a little auger-hole in fear,
Peeped—but his eyes, before they had their will,
Were shrivelled into darkness in his head,
And dropt before him. So the Powers, who wait
On noble deeds, cancelled a sense misused;
And she, that knew not, passed: and all at once,
With twelve great shocks of sound, the shameless noon
Was clashed and hammered from a hundred towers,
One after one: but even then she gained
Her bower; whence reissuing, robed and crowned,
To meet her lord, she took the tax away,
And built herself an everlasting name.

THE TWO VOICES.

A STILL small voice spake unto me,
" Thou art so full of misery,
Were it not better not to be ? "

Then to the still small voice I said :
" Let me not cast in endless shade
What is so wonderfully made."

To which the voice did urge reply :
" To-day I saw the dragon-fly
Come from the wells where he did lie.

" An inner impulse rent the veil
Of his old husk : from head to tail
Came out clear plates of sapphire mail.

" He dried his wings : like gauze they grew :
Through crofts and pastures wet with dew
A living flash of light he flew."

I said, " When first the world began,
Young Nature through five cycles ran,
And in the sixth she moulded man.

" She gave him mind, the lordliest
Proportion, and, above the rest,
Dominion in the head and breast."

Thereto the silent voice replied :
" Self-blinded are you by your pride :
Look up through night : the world is wide

" This truth within thy mind rehearse,
That in a boundless universe
Is boundless better, boundless worse.

"Think you this mould of hopes and fears
Could find no statelier than his peers
In yonder hundred million spheres?"

It spake, moreover, in my mind:
"Though thou wert scattered to the wind,
Yet is there plenty of the kind."

Then did my response clearer fall:
"No compound of this earthly ball
Is like another, all in all."

To which he answered scoffingly:
"Good soul! suppose I grant it thee,
Who'll weep for thy deficiency?

"Or will one beam be less intense,
When thy peculiar difference
Is cancelled in the world of sense?"

I would have said, "Thou canst not know,
But my full heart, that worked below,
Rained through my sight its overflow.

Again the voice spake unto me:
"Thou art so steeped in misery,
Surely 'twere better not to be.

"Thine anguish will not let thee sleep,
Nor any train of reason keep:
Thou canst not think, but thou wilt weep."

I said, "The years with change advance:
If I make dark my countenance,
I shut my life from happier chance.

"Some turn this sickness yet might take,
Even yet." But he: "What drug can make
A withered palsy cease to shake?"

I wept, "Though I should die, I know
That all about the thorn will blow
In tufts of rosy-tinted snow;

"And men, through novel spheres of thought
Still moving after truth long sought,
Will learn new things when I am not."

"Yet," said the secret voice, "some time,
Sooner or later, will gray prime
Make thy grass hoar with early rime.

"Not less swift souls that yearn for light,
Rapt after heaven's starry flight,
Would sweep the tracts of day and night.

"Not less the bee would range her cells,
The furzy prickle fire the dells,
The foxglove cluster dappled bells."

I said that "all the years invent;
Each month is various to present
The world with some development.

"Were this not well, to bide mine hour,
Though watching from a ruined tower
How grows the day of human power?"

"The highest-mounted mind," he said,
"Still sees the sacred morning spread
The silent summit overhead.

"Will thirty seasons render plain
Those lonely lights that still remain,
Just breaking over land and main?

"Or make that morn, from his cold crown
And crystal silence creeping down,
Flood with full daylight glebe and town?

"Forerun thy peers, thy time, and let
Thy feet, millenniums hence, be set
In midst of knowledge dreamed not yet.

"Thou hast not gained a real height,
Nor art thou nearer to the light,
Because the scale is infinite.

"'Twere better not to breathe or speak,
Than cry for strength, remaining weak,
And seem to find, but still to seek.

"Moreover, but to seem to find
Asks what thou lackest, thought resigned,
A healthy frame, a quiet mind."

I said, "When I am gone away,
'He dared not tarry,' men will say,
Doing dishonor to my clay."

"This is more vile," he made reply,
"To breathe and loathe, to live and sigh,
Than once from dread of pain to die.

"Sick art thou—a divided will
Still heaping on the fear of ill
The fear of men, a coward still.

"Do men love thee? Art thou so bound
To men, that how thy name may sound
Will vex thee lying underground?

"The memory of the withered leaf
In endless time is scarce more brief
Than of the garnered Autumn-sheaf.

"Go, vexed Spirit, sleep in trust;
The right ear, that is filled with dust,
Hears little of the false or just."

"Hard task, to pluck resolve," I cried,
"From emptiness and the waste wide
Of that abyss, or scornful pride!

"Nay—rather yet that I could raise
One hope that warmed me in the days
While still I yearned for human praise.

"When, wide in soul and bold of tongue,
Among the tents I paused and sung,
The distant battle flashed and rung.

"I sung the joyful Pæan clear,
And, sitting, burnished without fear
The brand, the buckler, and the spear—

"Waiting to strive a happy strife,
To war with falsehood to the knife,
And not to lose the good of life—

"Some hidden principle to move,
To put together, part and prove,
And mete the bounds of hate and love—

"As far as might be, to carve out
Free space for every human doubt,
That the whole mind might orb about—

"To search through all I felt and saw,
The springs of life, the depths of awe,
And reach the law within the law:

"At least, not rotting like a weed,
But having sown some generous seed,
Fruitful of further thought and deed,

"To pass, when Life her light withdraws,
Not void of righteous self-applause,
Nor in a merely selfish cause—

"In some good cause, not in mine own,
To perish, wept for, honored, known,
And like a warrior overthrown;

"Whose eyes are dim with glorious tears,
When, soiled with noble dust, he hears
His country's war-song thrill his ears:

"Then dying of a mortal stroke,
What time the foeman's line is broke,
And all the war is rolled in smoke."

"Yea!" said the voice, "thy dream was good,
While thou abodest in the bud.
It was the stirring of the blood.

"If Nature put not forth her power
About the opening of the flower,
Who is it that could live an hour?

"Then comes the check, the change, the fall.
Pain rises up, old pleasures pall.
There is one remedy for all.

"Yet hadst thou, through enduring pain,
Linked month to month with such a chain
Of knitted purport, all were vain.

"Thou hadst not between death and birth
Dissolved the riddle of the earth.
So were thy labor little-worth.

"That men with knowledge merely played,
I told thee—hardly nigher made,
Though scaling slow from grade to grade;

"Much less this dreamer, deaf and blind,
Named man, may hope some truth to find,
That bears relation to the mind.

"For every worm beneath the moon
Draws different threads, and late and soon
Spins, toiling out his own cocoon.

"Cry, faint not: either Truth is born
Beyond the polar gleam forlorn,
Or in the gateways of the morn.

"Cry, faint not, climb: the summits slope
Beyond the furthest flights of hope,
Wrapt in dense cloud from base to cope,

"Sometimes a little corner shines,
As over rainy mist inclines
A gleaming crag with belts of pines.

"I will go forward, sayest thou,
I shall not fail to find her now.
Look up, the fold is on her brow.

"If straight thy track, or if oblique,
Thou know'st not. Shadows thou dost strike,
Embracing cloud, Ixion-like;

"And owning but a little more
Than beasts, abidest lame and poor,
Calling thyself a little lower

"Than angels. Cease to wail and brawl!
Why inch by inch to darkness crawl?
There is one remedy for all."

"O dull, one-sided voice," said I,
"Wilt thou make everything a lie,
To flatter me that I may die?

"I know that age to age succeeds,
Blowing a noise of tongues and deeds,
A dust of systems and of creeds.

"I cannot hide that some have striven,
Achieving calm, to whom was given
The joy that mixes man with Heaven:

"Who, rowing hard against the stream,
Saw distant gates of Eden gleam,
And did not dream it was a dream;

"But heard, by secret transport led,
Even in the charnels of the dead,
The murmur of the fountain-head—

"Which did accomplish their desire,
Bore and forbore, and did not tire,
Like Stephen, an unquenched fire.

"He heeded not reviling tones,
Nor sold his heart to idle moans,
Though cursed and scorned, and bruised with stones:

"But looking upward, full of grace,
He prayed, and from a happy place
God's glory smote him on the face."

The sullen answer slid betwixt:
"Not that the grounds of hope were fixed,
The elements were kindlier mixed."

I said, "I toil beneath the curse,
But, knowing not the universe,
I fear to slide from bad to worse.

"And that, in seeking to undo
One riddle, and to find the true,
I knit a hundred others new:

"Or that this anguish fleeting hence,
Unmanacled from bonds of sense,
Be fixed and frozen to permanence:

"For I go, weak from suffering here;
Naked I go, and void of cheer:
What is it that I may not fear?"

"Consider well," the voice replied,
"His face, that two hours since hath died;
Wilt thou find passion, pain or pride?

"Will he obey when one commands?
Or answer should one press his hands?
He answers not, nor understands.

"His palms are folded on his breast:
There is no other thing expressed
But long disquiet merged in rest.

"His lips are very mild and meek:
Though one should smite him on the cheek,
And on the mouth, he will not speak.

"His little daughter, whose sweet face
He kissed, taking his last embrace,
Becomes dishonor to her race—

"His sons grow up that bear his name,
Some grow to honor, some to shame,—
But he is chill to praise or blame.

"He will not hear the north-wind rave,
Nor, moaning, household shelter crave
From winter rains that beat his grave.

"High up the vapors fold and swim:
About him broods the twilight dim:
The place he knew forgetteth him."

"If all be dark, vague voice," I said,
"These things are wrapped in doubt and dread,
Nor canst thou show the dead are dead.

"The sap dries up: the plant declines.
A deeper tale my heart divines.
Know I not Death? the outward signs?

"I found him when my years were few;
A shadow on the graves I knew,
And darkness in the village yew.

"From grave to grave the shadow crept:
In her still place the morning wept:
Touched by his feet the daisy slept.

"The simple senses crowned his head:
'Omega! thou art Lord,' they said,
'We find no motion in the dead."

"Why, if man rot in dreamless ease,
Should that plain fact, as taught by these,
Not make him sure that he shall cease?

"Who forged that other influence,
That heat of inward evidence,
By which he doubts against the sense?

"He owns the fatal gift of eyes,
That read his spirit blindly wise,
Not simple as a thing that dies.

"Here sits he shaping wings to fly;
His heart forebodes a mystery:
He names the name Eternity.

"That type of Perfect in his mind
In Nature can he nowhere find,
He sows himself on every wind.

"He seems to hear a Heavenly Friend,
And through thick veils to apprehend
A labor working to an end.

"The end and the beginning vex
His reason: many things perplex,
With motions, checks, and counter-checks.

"He knows a baseness in his blood
At such strange war with something good,
He may not do the thing he would.

"Heaven opens inward, chasms yawn.
Vast images in glimmering dawn,
Half shown, are broken and withdrawn.

"Ah! sure within him and without,
Could his dark wisdom find it out,
There must be answer to his doubt.

"But thou canst answer not again.
With thine own weapon art thou slain,
Or thou wilt answer but in vain.

"The doubt would rest, I dare not solve.
In the same circle we revolve.
Assurance only breeds resolve."

"As when a billow, blown against,
Falls back, the voice with which I fenced
A little ceased, but recommenced.

"Where wert thou when thy father played
In his free field, and pastime made,
A merry boy in sun and shade?

"A merry boy they called him then.
He sat upon the knees of men
In days that never come again.

"Before the little ducts began
To feed thy bones with lime, and ran
Their course, till thou wert also man:

"Who took a wife, who reared his race,
Whose wrinkles gathered on his face,
Whose troubles number with his days:

"A life of nothings, nothing-worth,
From that first nothing ere his birth
To that last nothing under earth!"

"These words," I said, "are like the rest,
No certain clearness, but at best
A vague suspicion of the breast:

"But if I grant, thou might'st defend
The thesis which thy words intend—
That to begin implies to end;

"Yet how should I for certain hold,
Because my memory is so cold,
That I first was in human mould?

"I cannot make this matter plain,
But I would shoot, howe'er in vain,
A random arrow from the brain.

"It may be that no life is found,
Which only to one engine bound
Falls off, but cycles always round.

"As old mythologies relate,
Some draught of Lethe might await
The slipping through from state to state.

"As here we find in trances, men
Forget the dream that happens then,
Until they fall in trance again.

"So might we, if our state were such
As one before, remember much,
For those two likes might meet and touch

"But, if I lapsed from nobler place,
Some legend of a fallen race
Alone might hint of my disgrace;

"Some vague emotion of delight
In gazing up an Alpine height,
Some yearning toward the lamps of night.

"Or if through lower lives I came—
Though all experience past became
Consolidate in mind and frame—

"I might forget my weaker lot;
For is not our first year forgot?
The haunts of memory echo not.

"And men, whose reason long was blind,
From cells of madness unconfined,
Oft lose whole years of darker mind.

"Much more, if first I floated free,
As naked essence, must I be
Incompetent of memory:

"For memory dealing but with time,
And he with matter, could she climb
Beyond her own material prime?

"Moreover, something is or seems,
That touches me with mystic gleams,
Like glimpses of forgotten dreams—

"Of something felt, like something here;
Of something done, I know not where;
Such as no language may declare."

The still voice laughed. "I talk," said he,
"Not with thy dreams. Suffice it thee
Thy pain is a reality."

"But thou," said I, "hast missed thy mark,
Who sought'st to wreck my mortal ark,
By making all the horizon dark.

"Why not set forth, if I should do
This rashness, that which might ensue
With this old soul in organs new?

"Whatever crazy sorrow saith,
No life that breathes with human breath
Has ever truly longed for death.

"'Tis life, whereof our nerves are scant,
O life, not death, for which we pant;
More life, and fuller, that I want."

I ceased, and sat as one forlorn.
Then said the voice, in quiet scorn,
"Behold, it is the Sabbath morn."

And I arose, and I released
The casement, and the light increased
With freshness in the dawning east.

Like softened airs that blowing steal,
When meres begin to uncongeal,
The sweet church bells began to peal.

On to God's house the people prest:
Passing the place where each must rest,
Each entered like a welcome guest.

One walked between his wife and child,
With measured footfall firm and mild,
And now and then he gravely smiled.

The prudent partner of his blood
Leaned on him, faithful, gentle, good,
Wearing the rose of womanhood.

And in their double love secure,
The little maiden walked demure,
Pacing with downward eyelids pure.

These three made unity so sweet,
My frozen heart began to beat,
Remembering its ancient heat.

I blest them, and they wandered on:
I spoke, but answer came there none:
The dull and bitter voice was gone.

A second voice was at mine ear,
A little whisper silver-clear,
A murmur, "Be of better cheer."

As from some blissful neighborhood,
A notice faintly understood,
"I see the end, and know the good."

A little hint to solace woe,
A hint, a whisper breathing low,
"I may not speak of what I know."

Like an Æolian harp that wakes
No certain air, but overtakes
Far thought with music that it makes:

Such seemed the whisper at my side:
"What is it thou knowest, sweet voice?" I cried.
"A hidden hope," the voice replied:

So heavenly-toned, that in that hour
From out my sullen heart a power
Broke, like the rainbow from the shower,

To feel, although no tongue can prove,
That every cloud, that spreads above
And veileth love, itself is love.

And forth into the fields I went,
And Nature's living motion lent
The pulse of hope to discontent.

I wondered at the bounteous hours,
The slow result of winter showers:
You scarce could see the grass for flowers.

I wondered, while I paced along:
The woods were filled so full with song,
There seemed no room for sense of wrong.

So variously seemed all things wrought,
I marvelled how the mind was brought
To anchor by one gloomy thought;

And wherefore rather I made choice
To commune with that barren voice,
Than him that said, "Rejoice! rejoice!"

THE DAY-DREAM.

PROLOGUE.

O, Lady Flora, let me speak:
A pleasant hour has past away
While, dreaming on your damask cheek,
The dewy sister-eyelids lay.
As by the lattice you reclined,
I went through many wayward moods
To see you dreaming—and, behind,
A summer crisp with shining woods.
And I too dreamed, until at last
Across my fancy, brooding warm,
The reflex of a legend past,
And loosely settled into form.

And would you have the thought I had,
And see the vision that I saw,
Then take the broidery-frame, and add
A crimson to the quaint Macaw,
And I will tell it. Turn your face,
Nor look with that too-earnest eye—
The rhymes are dazzled from their place,
And ordered words asunder fly.

THE SLEEPING PALACE.

The varying year with blade and sheaf
Clothes and reclothes the happy plains;
Here rests the sap within the leaf,
Here stays the blood along the veins.
Faint shadows, vapors lightly curled,
Faint murmurs from the meadows come,
Like hints and echoes of the world
To spirits folded in the womb.

Soft lustre bathes the range of urns
On every slanting terrace-lawn.
The fountain to his place returns
Deep in the garden lake withdrawn.
Here droops the banner on the tower,
On the hall-hearths the festal fires,
The peacock in his laurel bower,
The parrot in his gilded wires.

Roof-haunting martins warm their eggs:
In these, in those the life is stayed.
The mantles from the golden pegs
Droop sleepily: no sound is made,
Not even of a gnat that sings.
More like a picture seemeth all
Than those old portraits of old kings,
That watch the sleepers from the wall.

Here sits the Butler with a flask
Between his knees, half-drained; and there
The wrinkled steward at his task,
The maid-of-honor blooming fair:
The page has caught her hand in his:
Her lips are severed as to speak:
His own are pouted to a kiss:
The blush is fixed upon her cheek.

Till all the hundred summers pass,
The beams, that through the Oriel shine,
Make prisms in every carven glass,
And beaker brimmed with noble wine.
Each baron at the banquet sleeps,
Grave faces gathered in a ring.
His state the king reposing keeps.
He must have been a jovial king.

All round a hedge upshoots, and shows
At distance like a little wood;
Thorns, ivies, woodbine, mistletoes,
And grapes with bunches red as blood;
All creeping plants, a wall of green
Close-matted, burr and brake and briar,
And glimpsing over these, just seen,
High up, the topmost palace-spire.

When will the hundred summers die,
And thought and time be born again,
And newer knowledge, drawing nigh,
Bring truth that sways the soul of men?
Here all things in their place remain,
As all were ordered, ages since.
Come, Care and Pleasure, Hope and Pain,
And bring the fated fairy Prince.

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY.

Year after year unto her feet,
  She lying on her couch alone,
Across the purple coverlet,
  The maiden's jet-black hair has grown,
On either side her tranced form
  Forth streaming from a braid of pearl:
The slumbrous light is rich and warm,
  And moves not on the rounded curl.

The silk star-broidered coverlid
  Unto her limbs itself doth mould
Languidly ever; and, amid
  Her full black ringlets downward rolled,
Glows forth each softly-shadowed arm
  With bracelets of the diamond bright:
Her constant beauty doth inform
  Stillness with love, and day with light.

She sleeps: her breathings are not heard
  In palace chambers far apart.
The fragrant tresses are not stirred
  That lie upon her charmed heart.
She sleeps: on either hand upswells
  The gold-fringed pillow lightly prest.
She sleeps, nor dreams, but ever dwells
  A perfect form in perfect rest.

THE ARRIVAL.

All precious things, discovered late,
  To those that seek them issue forth;
For love in sequel works with fate,
  And draws the veil from hidden worth.
He travels far from other skies—
  His mantle glitters on the rocks—

A fairy Prince, with joyful eyes,
And lighter-footed than the fox.

The bodies and the bones of those
That strove in other days to pass,
Are withered in the thorny close,
Or scattered blanching in the grass.
He gazes on the silent dead:
"They perished in their daring deeds."
This proverb flashes through his head,
"The many fail: the one succeeds."

He comes, scarce knowing what he seeks:
He breaks the hedge: he enters there:
The color flies into his cheeks:
He trusts to light on something fair;
For all his life the charm did talk
About his path, and hover near
With words of promise in his walk,
And whispered voices at his ear.

More close and close his footsteps wind;
The magic music in his heart
Beats quick and quicker, till he find
The quiet chamber far apart.
His spirit flutters like a lark,
He stoops—to kiss her—on his knee.
"Love, if thy tresses be so dark,
How dark those hidden eyes must be!"

THE REVIVAL.

A touch, a kiss! the charm was snapt.
There rose a noise of striking clocks,
And feet that ran, and doors that clapt,
And barking dogs, and crowing cocks;
A fuller light illumined all,
A breeze through all the garden swept,

A sudden hubbub shook the hall,
And sixty feet the fountain leapt.

The hedge broke in, the banner blew,
The butler drank, the steward scrawled,
The fire shot up, the martin flew,
The parrot screamed, the peacock squalled,
The maid and page renewed their strife,
The palace banged, and buzzed and clackt,
And all the long-pent stream of life
Dashed downward in a cataract.

And last with these the king awoke,
And in his chair himself upreared,
And yawned, and rubbed his face, and spoke,
"By holy rood, a royal beard!
How say you? we have slept, my lords.
My beard has grown into my lap."
The barons swore, with many words,
'Twas but an after-dinner's nap.

"Pardy," returned the king, "but still
My joints are something stiff or so.
My lord, and shall we pass the bill
I mentioned half an hour ago?"
The chancellor, sedate and vain,
In courteous words returned reply:
But dallied with his golden chain,
And, smiling, put the question by.

THE DEPARTURE.

And on her lover's arm she leant,
And round her waist she felt it fold,
And far across the hills they went
In that new world which is the old:
Across the hills, and far away
Beyond their utmost purple rim,

And deep into the dying day
The happy princess followed him.

"I'd sleep another hundred years,
O love, for such another kiss;"
"O wake forever, love," she hears,
"O love, 'twas such as this and this."
And o'er them many a sliding star,
And many a merry wind was borne,
And, streamed through many a golden bar,
The twilight melted into morn.

"O eyes long laid in happy sleep!"
"O happy sleep, that lightly fled!"
"O happy kiss, that woke thy sleep!"
"O love, thy kiss would wake the dead!"
And o'er them many a flowing range
Of vapor buoyed the crescent-bark,
And, rapt through many a rosy change,
The twilight died into the dark.

"A hundred summers! can it be?
And whither goest thou, tell me where!"
"O seek my father's court with me,
For there are greater wonders there."
And o'er the hills, and far away
Beyond their utmost purple rim,
Beyond the night, across the day,
Through all the world she followed him.

MORAL.

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,
And if you find no moral there,
Go look in any glass and say,
What moral is in being fair.

O, to what uses shall we put
The wildweed-flower that simply blows?
And is there any moral shut
Within the bosom of the rose?

But any man that walks the mead
In bud or blade, or bloom, may find,
According as his humors lead,
A meaning suited to his mind.
And liberal applications lie
In Art like Nature, dearest friend;
So 'twere to cramp its use, if I
Should hook it to some useful end.

L'ENVOI.

You shake your head. A random string
Your finer female sense offends.
Well—were it not a pleasant thing
To fall asleep with all one's friends;
To pass with all our social ties
To silence from the paths of men;
And every hundred years to rise
And learn the world, and sleep again;
To sleep through terms of mighty wars,
And wake on science grown to more,
On secrets of the brain, the stars,
As wild as aught of fairy lore;
And all that else the years will show,
The Poet-forms of stronger hours,
The vast Republics that may grow,
The Federations and the Powers;
Titanic forces taking birth
In divers seasons, divers climes;
For we are Ancients of the earth,
And in the morning of the times.

So sleeping, so aroused from sleep
Through sunny decades new and strange,
Or gay quinquenniads, would we reap
The flower and quintessence of change.

Ah, yet would I—and would I might!
So much your eyes my fancy take—
Be still the first to leap to light,
That I might kiss those eyes awake!
For, am I right or am I wrong,
To choose your own you did not care;
You'd have *my* moral from the song,
And I will take my pleasure there:
And, am I right or am I wrong,
My fancy, ranging through and through,
To search a meaning for the song,
Perforce will still revert to you;
Nor finds a closer truth than this
All-graceful head, so richly curled,
And evermore a costly kiss,
The prelude to some brighter world.

For since the time when Adam first
Embraced his Eve in happy hour,
And every bird of Eden burst
In carol, every bud to flower,
What eyes, like thine, have wakened hopes?
What lips, like thine, so sweetly joined?
Where on the double rosebud droops
The fulness of the pensive mind;
Which all too dearly self-involved,
Yet sleeps a dreamless sleep to me;
A sleep by kisses undissolved,
That lets thee neither hear nor see:
But break it. In the name of wife,
And in the rights that name may give,
Are clasped the moral of thy life,
And that for which I care to live.

EPILOGUE.

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,
And, if you find a meaning there,
O whisper to your glass, and say,
"What wonder, if he thinks me fair?"
What wonder I was all unwise,
To shape the song for your delight,
Like long-tailed birds of Paradise,
That float through Heaven, and cannot light?
Or old-world trains, upheld at court
By Cupid-boys of blooming hue—
But take it—earnest wed with sport,
And either sacred unto you.

AMPHION.

My father left a park to me,
But it is wild and barren,
A garden too with scarce a tree,
And waster than a warren:
Yet say the neighbors when they call,
It is not bad but good land,
And in it is the germ of all
That grows within the woodland.

O had I lived when song was great
In days of old Amphion,
And ta'en my fiddle to the gate,
Nor cared for seed or scion!
And had I lived when song was great,
And legs of trees were limber,
And ta'en my fiddle to the gate,
And fiddled in the timber!

'Tis said he had a tuneful tongue,
Such happy intonation,

Wherever he sat down and sung
He left a small plantation;
Wherever in a lonely grove
He set up his forlorn pipes,
The gouty oak began to move,
And flounder into hornpipes.

The mountain stirred its bushy crown,
And, as tradition teaches,
Young ashes pirouetted down,
Coquetting with young beeches;
And briony-vine and ivy-wreath
Ran forward to his rhyming,
And from the valleys underneath
Came little copses climbing.

The linden broke her ranks and rent
The woodbine wreaths that bind her,
And down the middle buzz! she went
With all her bees behind her:
The poplars, in long order due,
With cypress promenaded,
The shock-head willows two and two
By rivers gallopaded.

Came wet-shod alder from the wave,
Came yews, a dismal coterie;
Each plucked his one foot from the grave,
Poussetting with a sloe-tree:
Old elms came breaking from the vine,
The vine streamed out to follow,
And, sweating rosin, plumped the pine
From many a cloudy hollow.

And wasn't it a sight to see,
When, ere his song was ended,
Like some great landslip, tree by tree,
The country-side descended;
And shepherds from the mountain-eaves

Looked down, half-pleased, half-frightened,
As dashed about the drunken leaves
The random sunshine lightened!

O, nature first was fresh to men,
And wanton without measure;
So youthful and so flexile then,
You moved her at your pleasure.
Twang out, my fiddle! shake the twigs!
And make her dance attendance:
Blow, flute, and stir the stiff-set sprigs,
And scirrhous roots and tendons.

'Tis vain! in such a brassy age
I could not move a thistle;
The very sparrows in the hedge
Scarce answer to my whistle;
Or at the most, when three-parts-sick
With strumming and with scraping,
A jackass hechaws from the rick,
The passive oxen gaping.

But what is that I hear? a sound
Like sleepy counsel pleading:
O Lord!—'tis in my neighbor's ground,
The modern Muses reading.
They read Botanic Treatises,
And Works on Gardening through there,
And Methods of transplanting trees,
To look as if they grew there.

The withered Misses! how they prose
O'er books of travelled seamen,
And show you slips of all that grows
From England to Van Diemen.
They read in arbors clipt and cut,
And alleys, faded places,
By squares of tropic summer shut,
And warmed in crystal cases.

But these, though fed with careful dirt,
Are neither green nor sappy;
Half-conscious of the garden-squirt,
The spindlings look unhappy.
Better to me the meanest weed
That blows upon its mountain,
The vilest herb that runs to seed
Beside its native fountain.

And I must work through months of toil,
And years of cultivation,
Upon my proper patch of soil,
To grow my own plantation.
I'll take the showers as they fall,
I will not vex my bosom:
Enough, if at the end of all
A little garden blossom.

ST. AGNES' EVE.

I.

Deep on the convent-roof the snows
Are sparkling to the moon:
My breath to heaven like vapor goes:
May my soul follow soon!
The shadows of the convent-towers
Slant down the snowy sward,
Still creeping with the creeping hours
That lead me to my Lord:
Make Thou my spirit pure and clear
As are the frosty skies,
Or this first snowdrop of the year
That in my bosom lies.

II.

As these white robes are soiled and dark,
To yonder shining ground;

As this pale taper's earthly spark,
To yonder argent round;
So shows my soul before the Lamb,
My spirit before Thee;
So in mine earthly house I am,
To that I hope to be.
Break up the heavens, oh Lord! and far,
Through all yon starlight keen,
Draw me, thy bride, a glittering star,
In raiment white and clean.

III.

He lifts me to the golden doors;
The flashes come and go;
All heaven bursts her starry floors,
And strews her lights below,
And deepens on and up! the gates
Roll back, and far within
For me the Heavenly Bridegroom waits,
To make me pure of sin.
The sabbaths of Eternity,
One sabbath deep and wide—
A light upon the shining sea—
The Bridegroom with his bride!

SIR GALAHAD.

I.

My good blade carves the casques of men,
My tough lance thrusteth sure,
My strength is as the strength of ten,
Because my heart is pure.
The shattering trumpet shrilleth high,
The hard brands shiver on the steel,
The splintered spear-shafts crack and fly,
The horse and rider reel:
They reel, they roll in clanging lists,

And when the tide of combat stands,
Perfume and flowers fall in showers,
That lightly rain from ladies' hands.

II.

How sweet are looks that ladies bend
On whom their favors fall!
For them I battle till the end,
To save from shame and thrall:
But all my heart is drawn above,
My knees are bowed in crypt and shrine:
I never felt the kiss of love,
Nor maiden's hand in mine.
More bounteous aspects on me beam,
Me mightier transports move and thrill;
So keep I fair through faith and prayer
A virgin heart in work and will.

III.

When down the stormy crescent goes,
A light before me swims,
Between dark stems the forest glows,
I hear a noise of hymns:
Then by some secret shrine I ride;
I hear a voice, but none are there;
The stalls are void, the doors are wide,
The tapers burning fair.
Fair gleams the snowy altar-cloth,
The silver vessels sparkle clean,
The shrill bell rings, the censer swings,
And solemn chants resound between.

IV.

Sometimes on lonely mountain-meres
I find a magic bark;
I leap on board: no helmsman steers:
I float till all is dark.
A gentle sound, an awful light!
Three angels bear the holy Grail:

With folded feet, in stoles of white,
On sleeping wings they sail.
Ah, blessed vision! blood of God!
My spirit beats her mortal bars,
As down dark tides the glory slides,
And star-light mingles with the stars.

V.

When on my goodly charger borne
Through dreaming towns I go,
The cock crows ere the Christmas morn,
The streets are dumb with snow.
The tempest crackles on the leads,
And, ringing, spins from brand and mail;
But o'er the dark a glory spreads,
And gilds the driving hail.
I leave the plain, I climb the height;
No branchy thicket shelter yields;
But blessed forms in whistling storms
Fly o'er waste fens and windy fields.

VI.

A maiden knight—to me is given
Such hope, I know not fear;
I yearn to breathe the airs of heaven
That often meet me here.
I muse on joy that will not cease,
Pure spaces clothed in living beams,
Pure lilies of eternal peace,
Whose odors haunt my dreams;
And, stricken by an angel's hand,
This mortal armor that I wear,
This weight and size, this heart and eyes,
Are touched, are turned to finest air.

VII.

The clouds are broken in the sky,
And through the mountain-walls
A rolling organ-harmony

Swells up, and shakes and falls.
Then move the trees, the copses nod,
Wings flutter, voices hover clear:
"O just and faithful knight of God!
Ride on! the prize is near."
So pass I hostel, hall, and grange;
By bridge and ford, by park and pale,
All-armed I ride, whate'er betide,
Until I find the holy Grail.

EDWARD GRAY.

Sweet Emma Moreland of yonder town
Met me walking on yonder way,
"And have you lost your heart?" she said;
"And are you married yet, Edward Gray?"

Sweet Emma Moreland spoke to me:
Bitterly weeping I turned away:
"Sweet Emma Moreland, love no more
Can touch the heart of Edward Gray.

"Ellen Adair she loved me well,
Against her father's and mother's will:
To-day I sat for an hour and wept,
By Ellen's grave, on the windy hill.

"Shy she was, and I thought her cold;
Thought her proud, and fled over the sea;
Filled I was with folly and spite,
When Ellen Adair was dying for me.

"Cruel, cruel the words I said!
Cruelly came they back to-day:
'You're too slight and fickle,' I said,
'To trouble the heart of Edward Gray.'

"There I put my face in the grass—
Whispered, 'Listen to my despair:
I repent me of all I did:
Speak a little, Ellen Adair!'

"Then I took a pencil, and wrote
On the mossy stone, as I lay,
'Here lies the body of Ellen Adair;
And here the heart of Edward Gray!'

"Love may come, and love may go,
And fly, like a bird, from tree to tree:
But I will love no more, no more,
Till Ellen Adair come back to me.

"Bitterly wept I over the stone:
Bitterly weeping I turned away:
There lies the body of Ellen Adair!
And there the heart of Edward Gray!"

WILL WATERPROOF'S LYRICAL MONOLOGUE.

MADE AT THE COCK.

O PLUMP head-waiter at The Cook,
To which I most resort,
How goes the time? 'Tis five o'clock.
Go fetch a pint of port:
But let it not be such as that
You set before chance-comers,
But such whose father-grape grew fat
On Lusitanian summers.

No vain libation to the Muse,
But may she still be kind,
And whisper lovely words, and use
Her influence on the mind.

To make me write my random rhymes,
Ere they be half-forgotten;
Nor add and alter, many times,
Till all be ripe and rotten.

I pledge her, and she comes and dips
Her laurel in the wine,
And lays it thrice upon my lips,
These favored lips of mine;
Until the charm have power to make
New life-blood warm the bosom,
And barren commonplaces break
In full and kindly blossom.

I pledge her silent at the board;
Her gradual fingers steal
And touch upon the master-chord
Of all I felt and feel.
Old wishes, ghosts of broken plans,
And phantom hopes assemble;
And that child's heart within the man's
Begins to move and tremble.

Through many an hour of summer suns
By many pleasant ways,
Against its fountain upward runs
The current of my days:
I kiss the lips I once have kissed;
The gas-light wavers dimmer;
And softly, through a vinous mist,
My college friendships glimmer.

I grow in worth, and wit, and sense,
Unboding critic-pen,
Or that eternal want of pence,
Which vexes public men,
Who hold their hands to all, and cry
For that which all deny them—
Who sweep the crossings, wet or dry,
And all the world go by them.

Ah yet, though all the world forsake,
Though fortune clip my wings,
I will not cramp my heart, nor take
Half-views of men and things.
Let Whig and Tory stir their blood;
There must be stormy weather;
But for some true result of good
All parties work together.

Let there be thistles, there are grapes;
If old things, there are new;
Ten thousand broken lights and shapes,
Yet glimpses of the true.
Let raffs be rife in prose and rhyme,
We lack not rhymes and reasons,
As on this whirligig of Time
We circle with the seasons.

This earth is rich in man and maid;
With fair horizons bound:
This whole wide earth of light and shade
Comes out, a perfect round.
High over roaring Temple-bar,
And, set in Heaven's third story,
I look at all things as they are,
But through a kind of glory.

* * * *

Head-waiter, honored by the guest
Half-mused, or reeling-ripe,
The pint, you brought me, was the best
That ever came from pipe.
But though the port surpasses praise,
My nerves have dealt with stiffer.
Is there some magic in the place?
Or do my peptics differ?

For since I came to live and learn,
No pint of white or red
Had ever half the power to turn
This wheel within my head,

Which bears a seasoned brain about,
Unsubject to confusion,
Though soaked and saturate, out and out,
Through every convolution.

For I am of a numerous house,
With many kinsmen gay,
Where long and largely we carouse,
As who shall say me nay:
Each month, a birthday coming on,
We drink, defying trouble,
Or sometimes two would meet in one,
And then we drank it double;

Whether the vintage, yet unkept,
Had relish fiery-new,
Or, elbow-deep in sawdust, slept,
As old as Waterloo;
Or stowed (when classic Canning died)
In musty bins and chambers,
Had cast upon its crusty side
The gloom of ten Decembers.

The Muse, the jolly Muse, it is!
She answered to my call,
She changes with that mood or this,
Is all-in-all to all:
She lit the spark within my throat,
To make my blood run quicker,
Used all her fiery will, and smote
Her life into the liquor.

And hence this halo lives about
The waiter's hands, that reach
To each his perfect pint of stout,
His proper chop to each.
He looks not like the common breed
That with the napkin dally;
I think he came, like Ganymede,
From some delightful valley.

The Cock was of a larger egg
  Than modern poultry drop,
Stept forward on a firmer leg,
  And crammed a plumper crop;
Upon an ampler dunghill trod,
  Crowed lustier, late and early,
Sipt wine from silver, praising God,
  And raked in golden barley.

A private life was all his joy,
  Till in a court he saw
A something-pottle-bodied boy,
  That knuckled at the taw:
He stooped and clutched him, fair and good,
  Flew over roof and casement:
His brothers of the weather stood
  Stock-still for sheer amazement.

But he, by farmstead, thorpe and spire,
  And followed with acclaims,
A sign to many a staring shire,
  Came crowing over Thames.
Right down by smoky Paul's they bore,
  Till, where the street grows straiter,
One fixed forever at the door,
  And one became head-waiter.

* * * *

But whither would my fancy go?
  How out of place she makes
The violet of a legend blow
  Among the chops and steaks!
'Tis but a steward of the can,
  One shade more plump than common,
As just and mere a serving-man
  As any, born of woman.

I ranged too high: what draws me down
  Into the common day?

Is it the weight of that half-crown,
  Which I shall have to pay?
For, something duller than at first,
  Nor wholly comfortable,
I sit, (my empty glass reversed,)
  And thrumming on the table:

Half-fearful that, with self at strife,
  I take myself to task:
Lest of the fulness of my life
  I leave an empty flask:
For I had hope, by something rare,
  To prove myself a poet;
But, while I plan and plan, my hair
  Is gray before I know it.

So fares it since the years began,
  Till they be gathered up;
The truth that flies the flowing can,
  Will haunt the vacant cup:
And others' follies teach us not,
  Nor much their wisdom teaches;
And most, of sterling worth, is what
  Our own experience preaches.

Ah! let the rusty theme alone!
  We know not what we know.
But for my pleasant hour, 'tis gone,
  'Tis gone, and let it go.
'Tis gone: a thousand such have slipt
  Away from my embraces,
And fallen into the dusty crypt
  Of darkened forms and faces.

Go, therefore, thou! thy betters went
  Long since, and came no more:
With peals of genial clamor sent
  From many a tavern-door,
With twisted quirks and happy hits,
  From misty men of letters;

The tavern-hours of mighty wits—
Thine elders and thy betters.

Hours, when the Poet's words and looks
Had yet their native glow:
Nor yet the fear of little books
Had made him talk for show;
But, all his vast heart sherris-warmed,
He flashed his random speeches;
Ere days, that deal in ana, swarmed
His literary leeches.

So mix forever with the past,
Like all good things on earth!
For should I prize thee, couldst thou last,
At half thy real worth?
I hold it good, good things should pass:
With time I will not quarrel:
It is but yonder empty glass
That makes me maudlin-moral.

* * * *

Head-waiter of the chop-house here,
To which I most resort,
I too must part: I hold thee dear
For this good pint of port.
For this, thou shalt from all things suck
Marrow of mirth and laughter;
And, wheresoe'er thou move, good luck
Shall fling her old shoe after.

But thou wilt never move from hence.
The sphere thy fate allots:
Thy latter days increased with pence
Go down among the pots:
Thou battenest by the greasy gleam
In haunts of hungry sinners,
Old boxes, larded with the steam
Of thirty thousand dinners.

We fret, *we* fume, would shift our skins,
Would quarrel with our lot;
Thy care is, under polished tins,
To serve the hot-and-hot;
To come and go, and come again,
Returning like the pewit,
And watched by silent gentlemen,
That trifle with the cruet.

Live long, ere from thy topmost head
The thick-set hazel dies;
Long, ere the hateful crow shall tread
The corners of thine eyes;
Live long, nor feel in head or chest
Our changeful equinoxes,
Till mellow Death, like some late guest,
Shall call thee from the boxes.

But when he calls, and thou shalt cease
To pace the gritted floor,
And, laying down an unctuous lease
Of life, shalt earn no more:
No carved cross-bones, the types of Death,
Shall show thee past to Heaven;
But carved cross-pipes, and, underneath,
A pint-pot, neatly graven.

LADY CLARE.

It was the time when lilies blow,
And clouds are highest up in air,
Lord Ronald brought a lily-white doe
To give his cousin, Lady Clare.

I trow they did not part in scorn:
Lovers long-betrothed were they:
They two will wed the morrow morn;
God's blessing on the day!

"He does not love me for my birth,
Nor for my lands so broad and fair;
He loves me for my own true worth,
And that is well," said Lady Clare.

In there came old Alice the nurse,
Said, "Who was this that went from thee?"
"It was my cousin," said Lady Clare,
"To-morrow he weds with me."

"O God be thanked!" said Alice the nurse,
"That all comes round so just and fair:
Lord Ronald is heir of all your lands,
And you are not the Lady Clare."

"Are ye out of your mind, my nurse, my nurse?"
Said Lady Clare, "that ye speak so wild?"
"As God's above," said Alice the nurse,
"I speak the truth: you are my child.

"The old Earl's daughter died at my breast;
I speak the truth as I live by bread!
I buried her like my own sweet child,
And put my child in her stead."

"Falsely, falsely have ye done,
O mother," she said, "if this be true,
To keep the best man under the sun
So many years from his due."

"Nay now, my child," said Alice the nurse,
"But keep the secret for your life,
And all you have will be Lord Ronald's,
When you are man and wife."

"If I'm a beggar born," she said,
"I will speak out, for I dare not lie.
Pull off, pull off the brooch of gold,
And fling the diamond necklace by."

"Nay now, my child," said Alice the nurse,
"But keep the secret all ye can."
She said "Not so: but I will know
If there be any faith in man."

"Nay now, what faith?" said Alice the nurse,
"The man will cleave unto his right."
"And he shall have it," the lady replied,
"Though I should die to-night."

"Yet give one kiss to your mother dear!
Alas, my child, I sinned for thee."
"O mother, mother, mother," she said,
"So strange it seems to me.

"Yet here's a kiss for my mother dear,
My mother dear, if this be so,
And lay your hand upon my head,
And bless me, mother, ere I go."

She clad herself in a russet gown,
She was no longer Lady Clare:
She went by dale, and she went by down,
With a single rose in her hair.

The lily-white doe Lord Ronald had brought
Leapt up from where she lay,
Dropt her head in the maiden's hand,
And followed her all the way.

Down stept Lord Ronald from his tower:
"O Lady Clare, you shame your worth!
Why come you drest like a village maid,
That are the flower of the earth?"

"If I come drest like a village maid,
I am but as my fortunes are:
I am a beggar born," she said,
"And not the Lady Clare."

"Play me no tricks," said Lord Ronald,
"For I am yours in word and deed.
Play me no tricks," said Lord Ronald,
"Your riddle is hard to read."

O and proudly stood she up!
Her heart within her did not fail:
She looked into Lord Ronald's eyes,
And told him all her nurse's tale.

He laughed a laugh of merry scorn:
He turned and kissed her where she stood:
"If you are not the heiress born,
And I," said he, "the next in blood—

"If you are not the heiress born,
And I," said he, "the lawful heir,
We two will wed to-morrow morn,
And you shall still be Lady Clare."

THE LORD OF BURLEIGH.

In her ear he whispers gayly,
"If my heart by signs can tell,
Maiden, I have watched thee daily,
And I think thou lov'st me well."
She replies, in accents fainter,
"There is none I love like thee."
He is but a landscape-painter,
And a village maiden she.
He to lips, that fondly falter,
Presses his without reproof;
Leads her to the village altar,
And they leave her father's roof.
"I can make no marriage present;
Little can I give my wife.

Love will make our cottage pleasant,
And I love thee more than life."
They by parks and lodges going
See the lordly castles stand:
Summer woods, about them blowing,
Made a murmur in the land.
From deep thought himself he rouses,
Says to her that loves him well,
"Let us see these handsome houses
Where the wealthy nobles dwell."
So she goes by him attended,
Hears him lovingly converse,
Sees whatever fair and splendid
Lay betwixt his home and hers;
Parks with oak and chestnut shady,
Parks and ordered gardens great,
Ancient homes of lord and lady,
Built for pleasure and for state.
All he shows her makes him dearer:
Evermore she seems to gaze
On that cottage growing nearer,
Where they twain will spend their days
O but she will love him truly!
He shall have a cheerful home;
She will order all things duly,
When beneath his roof they come.
Thus her heart rejoices greatly,
Till a gateway she discerns
With armorial bearings stately,
And beneath the gate she turns;
Sees a mansion more majestic
Than all those she saw before;
Many a gallant gay domestic
Bows before him at the door.
And they speak in gentle murmur,
When they answer to his call.
While he treads with footstep firmer,
Leading on from hall to hall.

And, while now she wonders blindly,
Nor the meaning can divine,
Proudly turns he round and kindly,
"All of this is mine and thine."
Here he lives in state and bounty,
Lord of Burleigh, fair and free,
Not a lord in all the county
Is so great a lord as he.
All at once the color flushes
Her sweet face from brow to chin:
As it were with shame she blushes,
And her spirit changed within.
Then her countenance all over
Pale again as death did prove:
But he clasped her like a lover,
And he cheered her soul with love.
So she strove against her weakness,
Though at times her spirit sank:
Shaped her heart with woman's meekness
To all duties of her rank:
And a gentle consort made he,
And her gentle mind was such
That she grew a noble lady,
And the people loved her much.
But a trouble weighed upon her,
And perplexed her, night and morn,
With the burthen of an honor
Unto which she was not born.
Faint she grew, and ever fainter,
As she murmured, "O, that he
Were once more that landscape-painter,
Which did win my heart from me!"
So she drooped and drooped before him,
Fading slowly from his side:
Three fair children first she bore him,
Then before her time she died.
Weeping, weeping late and early,
Walking up and pacing down,

Deeply mourned the Lord of Burleigh,
Burleigh-house by Stamford town.
And he came to look upon her,
And he looked at her and said,
"Bring the dress, and put it on her,
That she wore when she was wed."
Then her people, softly treading,
Bore to earth her body, drest
In the dress that she was wed in,
That her spirit might have rest.

SIR LAUNCELOT AND QUEEN GUINEVERE.

A FRAGMENT.

Like souls that balance joy and pain,
With tears and smiles from heaven again
The maiden Spring upon the plain
Came in a sun-lit fall of rain.
In crystal vapor everywhere
Blue isles of heaven laughed between,
And, far in forest-deeps unseen,
The topmost elm tree gathered green
From draughts of balmy air.

Sometimes the linnet piped his song:
Sometimes the throstle whistled strong:
Sometimes the sparhawk, wheeled along,
Hushed all the groves from fear of wrong:
By grassy capes with fuller sound
In curves the yellowing river ran,
And drooping chestnut-buds began
To spread into the perfect fan,
Above the teeming ground.

Then, in the boyhood of the year,
Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere
Rode through the coverts of the deer,
With blissful treble ringing clear.
She seemed a part of joyous Spring:
A gown of grass-green silk she wore,
Buckled with golden clasps before;
A light-green tuft of plumes she bore
Closed in a golden ring.

Now on some twisted ivy-net,
Now by some tinkling rivulet,
In mosses mixt with violet,
Her cream-white mule his pastern set:
And fleeter now she skimmed the plains
Than she whose elfin prancer springs
By night to eery warblings,
When all the glimmering moorland rings
With jingling bridle-reins.

As she fled fast through sun and shade,
The happy winds upon her played,
Blowing the ringlet from the braid:
She looked so lovely, as she swayed
The rein with dainty finger-tips,
A man had given all other bliss,
And all his worldly worth for this,
To waste his whole heart in one kiss
Upon her perfect lips.

A FAREWELL.

Flow down, cold rivulet, to the sea,
Thy tribute wave deliver:
No more by thee my steps shall be
Forever and forever.

Flow, softly flow, by lawn and lea
A rivulet then a river:
Nowhere by thee my steps shall be,
Forever and forever.

But here will sigh thine alder tree
And here thine aspen shiver;
And here by thee will hum the bee
Forever and forever.

A thousand suns will stream on thee,
A thousand moons will quiver;
But not by thee my steps shall be,
Forever and forever.

THE BEGGAR MAID.

Her arms across her breast she laid;
She was more fair than words can say:
Barefooted came the beggar maid
Before the King Cophetua.
In robe and crown the king stept down,
To meet and greet her on her way;
"It is no wonder," said the lords,
"She is more beautiful than day."

As shines the moon in clouded skies,
She in her poor attire was seen:
One praised her ankles, one her eyes,
One her dark hair and lovesome mien.
So sweet a face, such angel grace,
In all that land had never been:
Cophetua sware a royal oath:
"This beggar maid shall be my queen!"

THE VISION OF SIN.

I HAD a vision when the night was late:
A youth came riding toward a palace-gate.
He rode a horse with wings that would have flown,
But that his heavy rider kept him down.
And from the palace came a child of sin,
And took him by the curls, and led him in,
Where sat a company with heated eyes,
Expecting when a fountain should arise:
A sleepy light upon their brows and lips—
As when the sun, a crescent of eclipse,
Dreams over lake and lawn, and isles and capes—
Suffused them, sitting, lying, languid shapes,
By heaps of gourds, and skins of wine, and piles of grapes.

Then methought I heard a mellow sound,
Gathering up from all the lower ground;
Narrowing in to where they sat assembled,
Low voluptuous music winding trembled,
Woven in circles: they that heard it sighed,
Panted hand in hand with faces pale,
Swung themselves, and in low tones replied;
Till the fountain spouted, showering wide
Sleet of diamond-drift and pearly hail;
Then the music touched the gates and died;
Rose again from where it seemed to fail,
Stormed in orbs of song, a growing gale;
Till thronging in and in, to where they waited,
As 'twere a hundred-throated nightingale,
The strong tempestuous treble throbbed and palpitated;
Ran into its giddiest whirl of sound,
Caught the sparkles, and in circles,
Purple gauzes, golden hazes, liquid mazes,
Flung the torrent rainbow round;
Then they started from their places,

Moved with violence, changed in hue,
Caught each other with wild grimaces,
Half-invisible to the view,
Wheeling with precipitate paces
To the melody, till they flew,
Hair, and eyes, and limbs, and faces,
Twisted hard in fierce embraces,
Like to Furies, like to Graces,
Dashed together in blinding dew:
Till, killed with some luxurious agony
The nerve-dissolving melody
Fluttered headlong from the sky.

And then I looked up toward a mountain-tract,
That girt the region with high cliff and lawn:
I saw that every morning, far withdrawn
Beyond the darkness and the cataract,
God made himself an awful rose of dawn,
Unheeded: and detaching, fold by fold,
From those still heights, and, slowly drawing near,
A vapor heavy, hueless, formless, cold,
Came floating on for many a month and year,
Unheeded: and I thought I would have spoken,
And warned that madman ere it grew too late:
But, as in dreams, I could not. Mine was broken,
When that cold vapor touched the palace gate,
And linked again. I saw within my head
A gray and gap-toothed man as lean as death,
Who slowly rode across a withered heath,
And lighted at a ruined inn, and said:

"Wrinkled ostler, grim and thin!
Here is custom come your way;
Take my brute, and lead him in,
Stuff his ribs with mouldy hay.

"Bitter barmaid, waning fast!
See that sheets are on my bed;
What! the flower of life is past:
It is long before you wed.

"Slip-shod waiter, lank and sour,
At The Dragon on the heath!
Let us have a quiet hour,
Let us hob-and-nob with Death.

"I am old, but let me drink;
Bring me spices, bring me wine;
I remember, when I think,
That my youth was half divine.

"Wine is good for shrivelled lips,
When a blanket wraps the day,
When the rotten woodland drips,
And the leaf is stamped in clay.

"Sit thee down, and have no shame,
Cheek by jowl, and knee by knee:
What care I for any name?
What for order or degree?

"Let me screw thee up a peg:
Let me loose thy tongue with wine:
Callest thou that thing a leg?
Which is thinnest? thine or mine?

"Thou shalt not be saved by works:
Thou hast been a sinner too:
Ruined trunks on withered forks,
Empty scarecrows, I and you!

"Fill the cup, and fill the can:
Have a rouse before the morn:
Every moment dies a man,
Every moment one is born.

"We are men of ruined blood;
Therefore comes it we are wise.
Fish are we that love the mud,
Rising to no fancy-flies.

"Name and fame! to fly sublime
Through the courts, the camps, the schools,
Is to be the ball of Time,
Bandied by the hands of fools.

"Friendship!—to be two in one—
Let the canting liar pack!
Well I know, when I am gone,
How she mouths behind my back.

"Virtue!—to be good and just—
Every heart, when sifted well,
Is a clot of warmer dust,
Mixed with cunning sparks of hell.

"O! we two as well can look
Whited thought and cleanly life
As the priest, above his book
Leering at his neighbor's wife.

"Fill the cup, and fill the can:
Have a rouse before the morn:
Every moment dies a man,
Every moment one is born.

"Drink, and let the parties rave:
They are filled with idle spleen,
Rising, falling, like a wave,
For they know not what they mean.

"He that roars for liberty
Faster binds a tyrant's power;
And the tyrant's cruel glee
Forces on the freer hour.

"Fill the can, and fill the cup:
All the windy ways of men
Are but dust that rises up,
And is lightly laid again.

"Greet her with applausive breath,
Freedom, gayly doth she tread;
In her right a civic wreath,
In her left a human head.

"No, I love not what is new;
She is of an ancient house:
And I think we know the hue
Of that cap upon her brows.

"Let her go! her thirst she slakes
Where the bloody conduit runs:
Then her sweetest meal she makes
On the first-born of her sons.

"Drink to lofty hopes that cool—
Visions of a perfect State:
Drink we, last, the public fool,
Frantic love and frantic hate.

"Chant me now some wicked stave,
Till thy drooping courage rise,
And the glow-worm of the grave
Glimmer in thy rheumy eyes.

"Fear not thou to loose thy tongue;
Set thy hoary fancies free;
What is loathsome to the young
Savors well to thee and me.

"Change, reverting to the years,
When thy nerves could understand
What there is in loving tears,
And the warmth of hand in hand.

"Tell me tales of thy first love—
April hopes, the fools of chance;
Till the graves begin to move,
And the dead begin to dance.

"Fill the can, and fill the cup:
All the windy ways of men
Are but dust that rises up,
And is lightly laid again.

"Trooping from their mouldy dens
The chap-fallen circle spreads:
Welcome, fellow-citizens,
Hollow hearts and empty heads!

"You are bones, and what of that?
Every face, however full,
Padded round with flesh and fat,
Is but modelled on a skull.

"Death is king, and Vivat Rex!
Tread a measure on the stones,
Madam—if I know your sex,
From the fashion of your bones.

"No, I cannot praise the fire
In your eye—nor yet your lip:
All the more do I admire
Joints of cunning workmanship.

"Lo! God's likeness—the ground-plan—
Neither modelled, glazed, or framed:
Buss me, thou rough sketch of man,
Far too naked to be shamed!

"Drink to Fortune, drink to Chance,
While we keep a little breath!
Drink to heavy Ignorance!
Hob-and-nob with brother Death!

"Thou art mazed, the night is long,
And the longer night is near:
What! I am not all as wrong
As a bitter jest is dear.

"Youthful hopes, by scores, to all,
When the locks are crisp and curled;
Unto me my maudlin gall,
And my mockeries of the world.

"Fill the cup, and fill the can!
Mingle madness, mingle scorn!
Dregs of life, and lees of man:
Yet we will not die forlorn."

The voice grew faint: there came a further change;
Once more uprose the mystic mountain-range:
Below were men and horses pierced with worms,
And slowly quickening into lower forms;
By shards and scurf of salt, and scum of dross,
Old plash of rains, and refuse patched with moss.
Then some one spake: "Behold! it was a crime
Of sense avenged by sense that wore with time."
Another said: "The crime of sense became
The crime of malice, and is equal blame."
And one: "He had not wholly quenched his power;
A little grain of conscience made him sour."
At last I heard a voice upon the slope
Cry to the summit, "Is there any hope?"
To which an answer pealed from that high land,
But in a tongue no man could understand:
And on the glimmering limit far withdrawn
God made himself an awful rose of dawn.

THE SKIPPING-ROPE.

SURE never yet was Antelope
Could skip so lightly by.
Stand off, or else my skipping-rope
Will hit you in the eye.

How lightly whirls the skipping-rope!
How fairy-like you fly!
Go, get you gone, you muse and mope—
I hate that silly sigh.
Nay, dearest, teach me how to hope,
Or tell me how to die.
There, take it, take my skipping-rope
And hang yourself thereby.

MOVE EASTWARD, HAPPY EARTH, AND LEAVE.

Move eastward, happy earth, and leave
Yon orange sunset waning slow;
From fringes of the faded eve,
O, happy planet, eastward go;
Till over thy dark shoulder glow
Thy silver sister-world, and rise
To glass herself in dewy eyes
That watch me from the glen below.

Ah, bear me with thee, smoothly borne,
Dip forward under starry light,
And move me to my marriage-morn,
And round again to happy night.

BREAK, BREAK, BREAK.

Break, break, break,
On thy cold gray stones, oh Sea!
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,
That he shouts with his sister at play!
O well for the sailor lad,
That he sings in his boat on the bay!

And the stately ships go on
To their haven under the hill;
But oh for the touch of a vanished hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still!

Break, break, break,
At the foot of thy crags, oh Sea!
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
Will never come back to me.

THE POET'S SONG.

The rain had fallen, the Poet arose,
He passed by the town, and out of the street,
A light wind blew from the gates of the sun,
And waves of shadow went over the wheat,
And he sat him down in a lonely place,
And chanted a melody loud and sweet,
That made the wild-swan pause in her cloud,
And the lark drop down at his feet.

The swallow stopt as he hunted the bee,
The snake slipt under a spray,
The wild hawk stood with the down on his beak
And stared, with his foot on the prey,
And the nightingale thought, "I have sung many songs,
But never a one so gay,
For he sings of what the world will be
When the years have died away."

THE PRINCESS; A MEDLEY.

PROLOGUE.

Sir Walter Vivian all a summer's day
Gave his broad lawns until the set of sun
Up to the people: thither flocked at noon
His tenants, wife and child, and thither half

The neighboring borough with their Institute,
Of which he was the patron. I was there
From college, visiting the son,—the son
A Walter, too,—with others of our set,
Five others: we were seven at Vivian-place.

And me that morning Walter showed the house,
Greek, set with busts: from vases in the hall
Flowers of all heavens, and lovelier than their names,
Grew side by side; and on the pavement lay
Carved stones of the Abbey-ruin in the park,
Huge Ammonites, and the first bones of Time;
And on the tables every clime and age
Jumbled together; celts and calumets,
Claymore and snowshoe, toys in lava, fans
Of sandal, amber, ancient rosaries,
Laborious orient ivory sphere in sphere,
The cursed Malayan crease, and battle-clubs
From the isles of palm: and higher on the walls,
Betwixt the monstrous horns of elk and deer,
His own forefathers' arms and armor hung.

And "this," he said, "was Hugh's at Agincourt;
And that was old Sir Ralph's at Ascalon:
A good knight he! we keep a chronicle
With all about him,"—which he brought, and I
Dived in a hoard of tales that dealt with knights
Half-legend, half-historic, counts and kings
Who laid about them at their wills and died;
And mixt with these, a lady, one that armed
Her own fair head, and sallying through the gate,
Had beat her foes with slaughter from her walls.

"O miracle of women," said the book,
"O noble heart who, being strait-besieged
By this wild king to force her to his wish,
Nor bent, nor broke, nor shunned a soldier's death,
But now when all was lost or seemed as lost—
Her stature more than mortal in the burst
Of sunrise, her arm lifted, eyes on fire—

Brake with a blast of trumpets from the gate,
And, falling on them like a thunderbolt,
She trampled some beneath her horses' heels,
And some were whelmed with missiles of the wall,
And some were pushed with lances from the rock,
And part were drowned within the whirling brook:
O miracle of noble womanhood!"

So sang the gallant glorious chronicle;
And, I all rapt in this, "Come out," he said,
"To the Abbey: there is Aunt Elizabeth
And sister Lilia with the rest." We went
(I kept the book and had my finger in it)
Down through the park: strange was the sight to me;
For all the sloping pasture murmured, sown
With happy faces and with holiday.
There moved the multitude, a thousand heads:
The patient leaders of their Institute
Taught them with facts. One reared a font of stone,
And drew, from butts of water on the slope,
The fountain of the moment, playing now
A twisted snake, and now a rain of pearls,
Or steep-up spout whereon the gilded ball
Danced like a wisp: and somewhat lower down
A man with knobs and wires and vials fired
A cannon: Echo answered in her sleep
From hollow fields: and here were telescopes
For azure views; and there a group of girls
In circle waited, whom the electric shock
Dislinked with shrieks and laughter: round the lake
A little clock-work steamer paddling plied
And shook the lilies: perched about the knolls
A dozen angry models jetted steam:
A petty railway ran: a fire-balloon
Rose gem-like up before the dusky groves
And dropt a fairy parachute and past:
And there through twenty posts of telegraph

They flashed a saucy message to and fro
Between the mimic stations; so that sport
Went hand in hand with Science; otherwhere
Pure sport: a herd of boys with clamor bowled
And stumped the wicket; babies rolled about
Like tumbled fruit in grass; and men and maids
Arranged a country dance, and flew through light
And shadow, while the twangling violin
Struck up with Soldier-laddie, and overhead
The broad ambrosial aisles of lofty lime
Made noise with bees and breeze from end to end.

Strange was the sight and smacking of the time
And long we gazed, but satiated at length
Came to the ruins. High-arched and ivy-claspt,
Of finest Gothic, lighter than a fire,
Through one wide chasm of time and frost they gave
The park, the crowd, the house; but all within
The sward was trim as any garden lawn:
And here we lit on Aunt Elizabeth,
And Lilia with the rest, and lady friends
From neighbor seats: and there was Ralph himself,
A broken statue propt against the wall,
As gay as any. Lilia, wild with sport,
Half child, half woman as she was, had wound
A scarf of orange round the stony helm,
And robed the shoulders in a rosy silk,
That made the old warrior from his ivied nook
Glow like a sunbeam: near his tomb a feast
Shone, silver-set; about it lay the guests,
And there we joined them: then the maiden Aunt
Took this fair day for text, and from it preached
An universal culture for the crowd,
And all things great; but we, unworthier, told
Of college: he had climbed across the spikes,
And he had squeezed himself betwixt the bars,
And he had breathed the Proctor's dogs; and one
Discussed his tutor, rough to common men

But honeying at the whisper of a lord;
And one the Master, as a rogue in grain
Veneered with sanctimonious theory.

But while they talked, above their heads I saw
The feudal warrior lady-clad; which brought
My book to mind; and opening this, I read
Of old Sir Ralph a page or two that rang
With tilt and tourney; then the tale of her
That drove her foes with slaughter from her walls,
And much I praised her nobleness, and "Where,"
Asked Walter, patting Lilia's head, (she lay
Beside him,) "lives there such a woman now?"

Quick answered Lilia, "There are thousands now
Such women, but convention beats them down:
It is but bringing up; no more than that:
You men have done it: how I hate you all!
Ah, were I something great! I wish I were
Some mighty poetess, I would shame you then,
That love to keep us children! O, I wish
That I were some great Princess, I would build
Far off from men a college like a man's,
And I would teach them all that men are taught;
We are twice as quick!" And here she shook aside
The hand that played the patron with her curls.

And one said, smiling, "Pretty were the sight
If our old halls could change their sex, and flaunt
With prudes for proctors, dowagers for deans,
And sweet girl-graduates in their golden-hair.
I think they should not wear our rusty gowns,
But move as rich as Emperor-moths, or Ralph
Who shines so in the corner; yet I fear,
If there were many Lilias in the brood,
However deep you might embower the nest,
Some boy would spy it."

At this upon the sward

She tapt her tiny silken-sandaled foot:
"That's your light way; but I would make it death
For any male thing but to peep at us."

Petulant she spoke, and at herself she laughed;
A rosebud set with little wilful thorns,
And sweet as English air could make her, she:
But Walter hailed a score of names upon her,
And "petty Ogress," and "ungrateful Puss,"
And swore he longed at college, only longed,
All else was well, for she-society.
They boated and they cricketed; they talked
At wine, in clubs, of art, of politics;
They lost their weeks; they vext the souls of deans;
They rode; they betted; made a hundred friends,
And caught the blossom of the flying terms,
But missed the mignonette of Vivian-place,
The little hearth-flower Lilia. Thus he spoke,
Part banter, part affection.

"True," she said,
"We doubt not that. O yes, you missed us much.
I'll stake my ruby ring upon it you did."

She held it out; and as a parrot turns
Up through gilt wires a crafty loving eye,
And takes a lady's finger with all care,
And bites it for true heart, and not for harm,
So he with Lilia's. Daintily she shrieked
And wrung it. "Doubt my word again!" he said.
"Come, listen! here is proof that you were missed:
We seven stayed at Christmas up to read;
And there we took one tutor as to read:
The hard-grained Muses of the cube and square
Were out of season: never man, I think,
So mouldered in a sinecure as he:
For while our cloisters echoed frosty feet,
And our long walks were stript as bare as brooms,
We did but talk you over, pledge you all
In wassail: often, like as many girls—

Sick for the hollies and the yews of home—
As many little trifling Lilias—played
Charades and riddles as at Christmas here,
And *what's my thought* and *when* and *where* and *how*,
And often told a tale from mouth to mouth
As here at Christmas."

She remembered that:
A pleasant game, she thought: she liked it more
Than magic music, forfeits, all the rest.
But these—what kind of tales did men tell men,
She wondered, by themselves?

A half-disdain
Perched on the pouted blossom of her lips:
And Walter nodded at me: "*He* began,
The rest would follow, each in turn; and so
We forged a seven-fold story. Kind? what kind?
Chimeras, crotchets, Christmas solecisms,
Seven-headed monsters only made to kill
Time by the fire in winter."

"Kill him now,
The tyrant! kill him in the summer too,"
Said Lilia; "Why not now," the maiden Aunt.
"Why not a summer's as a winter's tale?
A tale for summer, as befits the time;
And something it should be to suit the place,
Heroic, for a hero lies beneath,
Grave, solemn!"

Walter warped his mouth at this
To something so mock-solemn, that I laughed,
And Lilia woke with sudden-shrilling mirth
An echo, like a ghostly woodpecker,
Hid in the ruins; till the maiden Aunt
(A little sense of wrong had touched her face
With color) turned to me with "As you will—
Heroic if you will, or what you will,
Or be yourself your hero if you will."
"Take Lilia, then, for heroine," clamored he,
'And make her some great Princess, six feet high,

Grand, epic, homicidal; and be you
The Prince to win her!"

"Then follow me, the Prince,"
I answered; "each be hero in his turn!
Seven and yet one, like shadows in a dream.—
Heroic seems our Princess as required.—
But something made to suit with time and place,
A Gothic ruin, and a Grecian house,
A talk of college and of ladies' rights,
A feudal knight in silken masquerade,
And, yonder, shrieks and strange experiments,
For which the good Sir Ralph had burnt them all,—
This *were* a medley! we should have him back
Who told the 'Winter's tale,' to do it for us.
No matter: we will say whatever comes.
And let the ladies sing us, if they will,
From time to time, some ballad, or a song,
To give us breathing-space."

So I began,
And the rest followed; and the women sang
Between the rougher voices of the men,
Like linnets in the pauses of the wind:
And here I give the story and the songs.

I.

A PRINCE I was, blue-eyed, and fair in face,
Of temper amorous, as the first of May,
With lengths of yellow ringlet, like a girl,
For on my cradle shone the northern star.

There lived an ancient legend in our house.
Some sorcerer, whom a far-off grandsire burnt
Because he cast no shadow, had foretold,
Dying, that none of all our blood should know
The shadow from the substance, and that one
Should come to fight with shadows, and to fall.
For so, my mother said, the story ran.

And, truly, waking dreams were, more or less,
An old and strange affection of the house.
Myself too had weird seizures, Heaven knows what:
On a sudden, in the midst of men and day,
And while I walked and talked as heretofore,
I seemed to move among a world of ghosts,
And feel myself the shadow of a dream.
Our great court-Galen poised his gilt-head cane,
And pawed his beard, and mutter'd catalepsy.
My mother pitying made a thousand prayers;
My mother was as mild as any saint,
Half-canonized by all that looked on her,
So gracious was her tact and tenderness:
But my good father thought a king a king;
He cared not for the affection of the house;
He held his sceptre like a pedant's wand
To lash offence, and with long arms and hands
Reached out, and picked offenders from the mass
For judgment.
Now it chanced that I had been,
While life was yet in bud and blade, betrothed
To one, a neighboring Princess; she to me
Was proxy-wedded with a bootless calf
At eight years old; and still from time to time
Came murmurs of her beauty from the South,
And of her brethren, youths of puissance;
And still I wore her picture by my heart,
And one dark tress; and all around them both
Sweet thoughts would swarm, as bees about their queen.

But when the days drew nigh that I should wed,
My father sent ambassadors with furs
And jewels, gifts, to fetch her: these brought back
A present, a great labor of the loom;
And therewithal an answer vague as wind:
Besides, they saw the king; he took the gifts;
He said there was a compact; that was true:
But then she had a will; was he to blame?

And maiden fancies; loved to live alone
Among her women: certain would not wed.

That morning in the presence-room I stood
With Cyril and with Florian, my two friends:
The first, a gentleman of broken means,
(His father's fault,) but given to starts and bursts
Of revel; and the last, my other heart,
And almost my half-self, for still we moved
Together, twinned, as horse's ear and eye.

Now while they spake I saw my father's face
Grow long and troubled, like a rising moon,
Inflamed with wrath: he started on his feet,
Tore the king's letter, snowed it down, and rent
The wonder of the loom through warp and woof,
From skirt to skirt; and at the last he sware
That he would send a hundred thousand men,
And bring her in a whirlwind; then he chewed
The thrice-turned cud of wrath, and cooked his spleen,
Communing with his captains of the war.

At last I spoke. "My father, let me go.
It cannot be but some gross error lies
In this report, this answer of a king,
Whom all men rate as kind and hospitable:
Or, maybe, I myself, my bride once seen,
Whate'er my grief to find her less than fame,
May rue the bargain made." And Florian said:
"I have a sister at the foreign court,
Who moves about the Princess; she, you know,
Who wedded with a nobleman from thence:
He, dying lately, left her, as I hear,
The lady of three castles in that land.
Through her this matter might be sifted clean."
And Cyril whispered: "Take me with you too."
Then, laughing, "What if these weird seizures come
Upon you in those lands, and no one near

To point you out the shadow from the truth!
Take me: I'll serve you better in a strait;
I grate on rusty hinges here:" but "No!"
Roared the rough king, "you shall not; we ourself
Will crush her pretty maiden fancies dead
In iron gauntlets: break the council up."

But when the council broke, I rose and passed
Through the wild woods that hung about the town;
Found a still place, and plucked her likeness out;
Laid it on flowers, and watched it lying bathed
In the green gleam of dewy-tasselled trees:
What were those fancies? wherefore break her troth?
Proud looked the lips: but while I meditated,
A wind arose, and rushed upon the South,
And shook the songs, the whispers, and the shrieks
Of the wild woods together; and a Voice
Went with it, "Follow, follow, thou shalt win."

Then, ere the silver sickle of that month
Became her golden shield, I stole from court
With Cyril and with Florian, unperceived,
Cat-footed through the town, and half in dread
To hear my father's clamor at our backs,
With Ho! from some bay-window shake the night;
But all was quiet: from the bastioned walls
Like threaded spiders, one by one, we dropt,
And flying reached the frontier: then we crost
To a livelier land; and so, by tilth and grange,
And vines, and blowing bosks of wilderness,
We gained the mother-city thick with towers,
And in the imperial palace found the king.
His name was Gama; cracked and small his voice,
But bland the smile that like a wrinkling wind
On glassy water drove his cheek in lines;
A little dry old man, without a star,
Not like a king: three days he feasted us,
And on the fourth I spake of why we came,

And my betrothed. "You do us, Prince," he said,
Airing a snowy hand and signet gem,
"All honor. We remember love ourselves
In our sweet youth: there did a compact pass
Long summers back, a kind of ceremony—
I think the year in which our olives failed.
I would you had her, Prince, with all my heart,
With my full heart: but there were widows here,
Two widows, Lady Psyche, Lady Blanche;
They fed her theories, in and out of place,
Maintaining that with equal husbandry
The woman were an equal to the man.
They harped on this; with this our banquets rang;
Our dances broke and buzzed in knots of talk;
Nothing but this: my very ears were hot
To hear them: knowledge, so my daughter held,
Was all in all; they had but been, she thought,
As children; they must lose the child, assume
The woman; then, Sir, awful odes she wrote,
Too awful, sure, for what they treated of,
But all she is and does is awful; odes
About this losing of the child; and rhymes
And dismal lyrics, prophesying change
Beyond all reason: these the women sang;
And they that know such things—I sought but peace,
No critic I—would call them masterpieces:
They mastered me. At last she begged a boon,
A certain summer palace which I have
Hard by your father's frontier: I said no,
Yet being an easy man, gave it; and there,
All wild to found an University
For maidens, on the spur she fled; and more
We know not,—only this: They see no men,
Not even her brother Arac, nor the twins
Her brethren, though they love her, look upon her
As on a kind of paragon; and I
(Pardon me saying it) were much loth to breed
Dispute betwixt myself and mine: but since

(And I confess with right) you think me bound
In some sort, I can give you letters to her;
And yet, to speak the truth, I rate your chance
Almost at naked nothing."

Thus the king;
And I, though nettled that he seemed to slur
With garrulous ease and oily courtesies
Our formal compact, yet, not less (all frets
But chafing me on fire to find my bride)
Went forth again with both my friends. We rode
Many a long league back to the North. At last
From hills that looked across a land of hope
We dropt with evening on a rustic town
Set in a gleaming river's crescent-curve,
Close at the boundary of the liberties;
There entered an old hostel, called mine host
To council, plied him with his richest wines,
And showed the late-writ letters of the king.

He, with a long, low sibilation, stared
As blank as death in marble; then exclaimed,
Averring it was clear against all rules
For any man to go: but as his brain
Began to mellow, "If the king," he said,
"Had given us letters, was he bound to speak?
The king would bear him out;" and at the last—
The summer of the vine in all his veins—
"No doubt that we might make it worth his while.
She once had passed that way; he heard her speak;
She scared him; life! he never saw the like;
She looked as grand as doomsday, and as grave:
And he, he reverenced his liege-lady there;
He always made a point to post with mares;
His daughter and his housemaid were the boys:
The land he understood for miles about
Was tilled by women; all the swine were sows
And all the dogs"—

But while he jested thus,
A thought flashed through me, which I clothed in act,
Remembering how we three presented Maid,
Or Nymph, or Goddess, at high tide of feast,
In masque or pageant at my father's court.
We sent mine host to purchase female gear;
He brought it, and himself, a sight to shake
The midriff of despair with laughter, holp
To lace us up, till, each, in maiden plumes
We rustled: him we gave a costly bribe
To guerdon silence, mounted our good steeds,
And boldly ventured on the liberties.

We followed up the river as we rode,
And rode till midnight, when the college lights
Began to glitter firefly-like in copse
And linden alley; then we past an arch,
Whereon a woman-statue rose with wings
From four winged horses dark against the stars,
And some inscription ran along the front,
But deep in shadow: further on we gained
A little street, half garden and half house;
But scarce could hear each other speak for noise
Of clocks and chimes, like silver hammers falling
On silver anvils, and the splash and stir
Of fountains spouted up and showering down
In meshes of the jasmine and the rose:
And all about us pealed the nightingale,
Rapt in her song, and careless of the snare.

There stood a bust of Pallas for a sign,
By two sphere lamps blazoned like Heaven and Earth
With constellation and with continent,
Above an entry: riding in, we called;
A plump-armed Ostleress and a stable wench
Came running at the call, and helped us down.
Then stept a buxom hostess forth, and sailed

Full-blown before us into rooms which gave
Upon a pillared porch, the bases lost
In laurel: her we asked of that and this,
And who were tutors. "Lady Blanche," she said,
"And Lady Psyche." "Which was prettiest,
Best-natured?" "Lady Psyche." "Hers are we,"
One voice, we cried; and I sat down and wrote,
In such a hand as when a field of corn
Bows all its ears before the roaring East;

"Three ladies of the Northern empire pray
Your Highness would enroll them with your own,
As Lady Psyche's pupils."

This I sealed:
The seal was Cupid bent above a scroll,
And o'er his head Uranian Venus hung,
And raised the blinding bandage from his eyes:
I gave the letter to be sent with dawn;
And then to bed, where half in doze I seemed
To float about a glimmering night, and watch
A full sea glazed with muffled moonlight, swell
On some dark shore just seen that it was rich.

As through the land at eve we went,
And plucked the ripened ears,
We fell out, my wife and I,
O, we fell out, I know not why,
And kissed again with tears.

For when we came where lies the child
We lost in other years,
There above the little grave,
O, there above the little grave,
We kissed again with tears.

II.

At break of day the College Portress came;
She brought us Academic silks, in hue
The lilac, with a silken hood to each,
And zoned with gold; and now when these were on,
And we as rich as moths from dusk cocoons,
She, curtseying her obeisance, let us know
The Princess Ida waited: out we paced,
I first, and following through the porch that sang
All round with laurel, issued in a court
Compact of lucid marbles, bossed with lengths
Of classic frieze, with ample awnings gay
Betwixt the pillars, and with great urns of flowers.
The Muses and the Graces, grouped in threes,
Enringed a billowing fountain in the midst:
And here and there on lattice edges lay
Or book or lute; but hastily we past,
And up a flight of stairs into the hall.

There at a board by tome and paper sat,
With two tame leopards crouched beside her throne.
All beauty compassed in a female form,
The Princess; liker to the inhabitant
Of some clear planet close upon the Sun,
Than our man's earth: such eyes were in her head.
And so much grace and power, breathing down
From over her arched brows, with every turn
Lived through her to the tips of her long hands
And to her feet. She rose her height, and said:

"We give you welcome: not without redound
Of use and glory to yourselves ye come,
The first-fruits of the stranger: aftertime,
And that full voice which circles round the grave,
Will rank you nobly, mingled up with me.
What! are the ladies of your land so tall?"
"We of the court," said Cyril. "From the court?"

She answered, "then ye know the Prince?" and he:
"The climax of his age: as though there were
One rose in all the world, your Highness that,
He worships your ideal:" she replied:
"We scarcely thought in our own hall to hear
This barren verbiage, current among men,
Light coin, the tinsel clink of compliment.
Your flight from out your bookless wilds would seem
As arguing love of knowledge and of power;
Your language proves you still the child. Indeed
We dream not of him: when we set our hand
To this great work, we purposed with ourselves
Never to wed. You likewise will do well,
Ladies, in entering here, to cast and fling
The tricks, which make us toys of men, that so,
Some future time, if so indeed you will,
You may with those self-styled our lords ally
Your fortunes, justlier balanced, scale with scale."

At those high words, we, conscious of ourselves,
Perused the matting; then an officer
Rose up and read the statutes, such as these:
Not for three years to correspond with home;
Not for three years to cross the liberties;
Not for three years to speak with any men;
And many more, which hastily subscribed,
We entered on the boards: and "Now," she cried,
"Ye are green wood, see ye warp not. Look, our hall!
Our statues!—not of those that men desire,
Sleek Odalisques, or oracles of mode,
Nor stunted squaws of West or East; but she
That taught the Sabine how to rule, and she
The foundress of the Babylonian wall,
The Carian Artemisia strong in war,
The Rhodope that built the pyramid,
Clelia, Cornelia, with the Palmyrene
That fought Aurelian, and the Roman brows
Of Agrippina. Dwell with these, and lose

Convention, since to look on noble forms
Makes noble through the sensuous organism
That which is higher. O, lift your natures up:
Embrace our aims; work out your freedom. Girls,
Knowledge is now no more a fountain sealed:
Drink deep, until the habits of the slave,
The sins of emptiness, gossip, and spite,
And slander, die. Better not be at all
Than not be noble. Leave us: you may go:
To-day the Lady Psyche will harangue
The fresh arrivals of the week before;
For they press in from all the provinces,
And fill the hive."

She spoke, and, bowing, waved
Dismissal; back again we crost the court
To Lady Psyche's: as we entered in,
There sat along the forms, like morning doves
That sun their milky bosoms on the thatch,
A patient range of pupils; she herself
Erect behind a desk of satin-wood,
A quick brunette, well-moulded, falcon-eyed,
And on the hither side, or so she looked,
Of twenty summers. At her left, a child,
In shining draperies, headed like a star,
Her maiden babe, a double April old,
Aglaïa slept. We sat: the Lady glanced:
Then Florian, but no livelier than the dame
That whispered "Asses ears" among the sedge,
"My sister." "Comely too by all that's fair,"
Said Cyril. "O, hush, hush!" and she began.

"This world was once a fluid haze of light,
Till toward the centre set the starry tides
And eddied into suns, that wheeling cast
The planets: then the monster, then the man;
Tattooed or woaded, winter-clad in skins,
Raw from the prime, and crushing down his mate;
As yet we find in barbarous isles, and here
Among the lowest."

Thereupon she took
A bird's-eye-view of all the ungracious past;
Glanced at the legendary Amazon
As emblematic of a nobler age;
Appraised the Lycian custom, spoke of those
That lay at wine with Lar and Lucumo;
Ran down the Persian, Grecian, Roman lines
Of empire, and the woman's state in each,
How far from just: till warming with her theme,
She fulmined out her scorn of laws Salique
And little-footed China, touched on Mahomet
With much contempt, and came to chivalry:
When some respect, however slight, was paid
To woman, superstition all awry:
However, then commenced the dawn: a beam
Had slanted forward, falling in a land
Of promise; fruit would follow. Deep, indeed,
Their debt of thanks to her who first had dared
To leap the rotten pales of prejudice,
Disyoke their necks from custom, and assert
None lordlier than themselves but that which made
Woman and man. She had founded; they must build:
Here might they learn whatever men were taught:
Let them not fear: some said their heads were less:
Some men's were small; not they the least of men;
For often fineness compensated size:
Besides, the brain was like the hand, and grew
With using: thence the man's, if more was more;
He took advantage of his strength to be
First in the field: some ages had been lost;
But woman ripened earlier, and her life
Was longer; and albeit their glorious names
Were fewer, scattered stars, yet since in truth
The highest is the measure of the man,
And not the Caffre, Hottentot, Malay,
Nor those horn-handed breakers of the glebe,
But Homer, Plato, Verulam; even so
With woman: and in arts of government,

Elizabeth and others; arts of war,
The peasant Joan and others; arts of grace,
Sappho and others vied with any man:
And, last not least, she who had left her place,
And bowed her state to them, that they might grow
To use and power on this Oasis, lapt
In the arms of leisure, sacred from the blight
Of ancient influence and scorn.

At last
She rose upon a wind of prophecy,
Dilating on the future; "everywhere
Two heads in council, two beside the hearth,
Two in the tangled business of the world,
Two in the liberal offices of life,
Two plummets dropt for one to sound the abyss
Of science, and the secrets of the mind:
Musician, painter, sculptor, critic, more:
And everywhere the broad and bounteous Earth
Should bear a double growth of those rare souls,
Poets, whose thoughts enrich the blood of the world."

She ended here, and beckoned us: the rest
Parted; and, glowing full-faced welcome, she
Began to address us, and was moving on
In gratulation, till as when a boat
Tacks, and the slackened sail flaps, all her voice
Faltering and fluttering in her throat, she cried,
"My brother!" "Well, my sister." "O," she said,
"What do you here? and in this dress? and these?
Why, who are these? a wolf within the fold!
A pack of wolves! the Lord be gracious to me!
A plot, a plot, a plot to ruin all!"
"No plot, no plot," he answered. "Wretched boy,
How saw you not the inscription on the gate,
LET NO MAN ENTER IN ON PAIN OF DEATH?"
"And if I had," he answered, "who could think

The softer Adams of your Academe,
O, sister, Sirens though they be, were such
As chanted on the blanching bones of men?"
"But you will find it otherwise," she said.
"You jest; ill jesting with edge-tools! My vow
Binds me to speak, and O, that iron will,
That axe-like edge unturnable, our Head,
The Princess." "Well, then, Psyche, take my life,
And nail me like a weasel on a grange
For warning: bury me beside the gate,
And cut this epitaph above my bones;
Here lies a brother by a sister slain,
All for the common good of womankind."
"Let me die, too," said Cyril, "having seen
And heard the Lady Psyche."

I struck in:
"Albeit so masked, Madam, I love the truth;
Receive it; and in me behold the Prince
Your countryman, affianced years ago
To the Lady Ida: here, for here she was,
And thus (what other way was left) I came."
"O Sir, oh Prince, I have no country; none;
If any, this; but none. Whate'er I was
Disrooted, what I am is grafted here.
Affianced, Sir? love-whispers may not breathe
Within this vestal limit, and how should I,
Who am not mine, say, live: the thunderbolt
Hangs silent; but prepare: I speak; it falls."
"Yet pause," I said; "for that inscription there,
I think no more of deadly lurks therein,
Than in a clapper clapping in a garth,
To scare the fowl from fruit: if more there be,
If more and acted on, what follows? war;
Your own work marred; for this your Academe,
Whichever side be Victor, in the halloo
Will topple to the trumpet down, and pass
With all fair theories only made to gild
A stormless summer.' "Let the Princess judge

Of that," she said: "farewell, Sir—and to you.
I shudder at the sequel, but I go."

"Are you that Lady Psyche," I rejoined,
"The fifth in line from that old Florian,
Yet hangs his portrait in my father's hall
(The gaunt old Baron with his beetle brow
Sun-shaded in the heat of dusty fights)
As he bestrode my Grandsire, when he fell,
And all else fled: we point to it, and we say,
The loyal warmth of Florian is not cold,
But branches current yet in kindred veins."
"Are you that Psyche," Florian added, "she
With whom I sang about the morning hills,
Flung ball, flew kite, and raced the purple fly,
And snared the squirrel of the glen? are you
That Psyche, wont to bind my throbbing brow,
To smooth my pillow, mix the foaming draught
Of fever, tell me pleasant tales, and read
My sickness down to happy dreams? are you
That brother-sister Psyche, both in one?
You were that Psyche, but what are you now?"
"You are that Psyche," Cyril said, "for whom
I would be that forever which I seem,
Woman, if I might sit beside your feet,
And glean your scattered sapience."

Then once more,
"Are you that Lady Psyche," I began,
"That on her bridal morn before she past
From all her old companions, when the king
Kissed her pale cheek, declared that ancient ties
Would still be dear beyond the southern hills;
That were there any of our people there
In want or peril, there was one to hear
And help them? look! for such are these and I."
"Are you that Psyche," Florian asked, "to whom,
In gentler days, your arrow-wounded fawn
Came flying while you sat beside the well?

The creature laid his muzzle on your lap,
And sobbed, and you sobbed with it, and the blood
Was sprinkled on your kirtle, and you wept.
That was fawn's blood, not brother's, yet you wept.
O by the bright head of my little niece,
You were that Psyche, and what are you now?"
"You are that Psyche," Cyril said again,
"The mother of the sweetest little maid
That ever crowed for kisses."

"Out upon it!"
She answered, "peace! and why should I not play
The Spartan Mother with emotion, be
The Lucius Junius Brutus of my kind?
Him you call great: he for the common weal,
The fading politics of mortal Rome,
As I might slay this child, if good need were,
Slew both his sons: and I, shall I, on whom
The secular emancipation turns
Of half this world, be swerved from right to save
A prince, a brother? a little will I yield.
Best so, perchance, for us, and well for you.
O hard, when love and duty clash! I fear
My conscience will not count me fleckless; yet—
Hear my conditions: promise (otherwise
You perish) as you came to slip away,
To-day, to-morrow, soon: it shall be said,
These women were too barbarous, would not learn;
They fled, who might have shamed us: promise,
all."

What could we else, we promised each; and she,
Like some wild creature, newly-caged, commenced
A to-and-fro, so pacing till she paused
By Florian; holding out her lily arms,
Took both his hands, and smiling faintly said:
"I knew you at the first: though you have grown,
You scarce have altered: I am sad and glad
To see you, Florian. *I* give thee to death,

My brother! it was duty spoke, not I.
My needful seeming harshness, pardon it.
Our mother, is she well?"

With that she kissed
His forehead, then, a moment after, clung
About him, and betwixt them blossomed up
From out a common vein of memory
Sweet household talk, and phrases of the hearth,
And far allusion, till the gracious dews
Began to glisten and to fall: and while
They stood, so rapt, we gazing, came a voice,
"I brought a message here from Lady Blanche."
Back started she, and turning round we saw
The Lady Blanche's daughter where she stood,
Melissa, with her hand upon the lock,
A rosy blonde, and in a college gown
That clad her like an April daffodilly,
(Her mother's color,) with her lips apart,
And all her thoughts as fair within her eyes,
As bottom agates seem to wave and float
In crystal currents of clear morning seas.

So stood that same fair creature at the door.
Then Lady Psyche, "Ah—Melissa—you!
You heard us?" and Melissa, "O pardon me!
I heard, I could not help it, did not wish:
But, dearest Lady, pray you fear me not,
Nor think I bear that heart within my breast,
To give three gallant gentlemen to death."
"I trust you," said the other, "for we two
Were always friends, none closer, elm and vine:
But yet your mother's jealous temperament—
Let not your prudence, dearest, drowse, or prove
The Danaïd of a leaky vase, for fear
This whole foundation ruin, and I lose
My honor, these their lives." "Ah, fear me not,"
Replied Melissa, "no—I would not tell,
No, not for all Aspasia's cleverness,

No, not to answer, Madam, all those hard things
That Sheba came to ask of Solomon."
" Be it so," the other, " that we still may lead
The new light up, and culminate in peace,
For Solomon may come to Sheba yet."
Said Cyril, " Madam, he the wisest man,
Feasted the woman wisest then, in halls
Of Lebanonian cedar: nor should you
(Though madam *you* should answer, *we* would ask)
Less welcome find among us, if you came
Among us, debtors for our lives to you,
Myself for something more." He said not what,
But " Thanks," she answered, " go: we have been
too long
Together: keep your hoods about the face;
They do so that affect abstraction here.
Speak little; mix not with the rest; and hold
Your promise: all, I trust, may yet be well."

We turned to go, but Cyril took the child,
And held her round the knees against his waist,
And blew the swollen cheek of a trumpeter,
While Psyche watched them, smiling, and the child
Pushed her flat hand against his face and laughed;
And thus our conference closed.

And then we strolled
For half the day through stately theatres
Benched crescent-wise. In each we sat, we heard
The grave Professor. On the lecture slate
The circle rounded under female hands
With flawless demonstration: followed then
A classic lecture, rich in sentiment,
With scraps of thundrous Epic lilted out
By violet-hooded Doctors, elegies
And quoted odes, and jewels five-words-long,
That on the stretched forefinger of all Time
Sparkle forever: then we dipt in all
That treats of whatsoever is, the state,

The total chronicles of man, the mind,
The morals, something of the frame, the rock,
The star, the bird, the fish, the shell, the flower,
Electric, chemic laws, and all the rest,
And whatsoever can be taught and known;
Till like three horses that have broken fence,
And glutted all night long breast-deep in corn,
We issued gorged with knowledge, and I spoke:
"Why, Sirs, they do all this as well as we."
"They hunt old trails," said Cyril, "very well;
But when did woman ever yet invent?"
"Ungracious!" answered Florian, "have you learnt
No more from Psyche's lecture, you that talked
The trash that made me sick, and almost sad?"
"O trash," he said, "but with a kernel in it.
Should I not call her wise who made me wise?
And learnt? I learnt more from her in a flash,
Than if my brainpan were an empty hull,
And every Muse tumbled a science in.
A thousand hearts lie fallow in these halls
And round these halls a thousand baby loves
Fly twanging headless arrows at the hearts,
Whence follows many a vacant pang; but O
With me, Sir, entered in the bigger boy,
The Head of all the golden-shafted firm,
The long-limbed lad that had a Psyche too;
He cleft me through the stomacher; and now
What think you of it, Florian? do I chase
The substance or the shadow? will it hold?
I have no sorcerer's malison on me,
No ghostly hauntings like his Highness. I
Flatter myself that always, everywhere,
I know the substance when I see it. Well,
Are castles shadows? Three of them? Is she
The sweet proprietress a shadow? If not,
Shall those three castles patch my tattered coat?
For dear are those three castles to my wants,
And dear is sister Psyche to my heart,
And two dear things are one of double worth,

And much I might have said, but that my zone
Unmanned me: then the Doctors! O to hear
The Doctors! O to watch the thirsty plants
Imbibing! once or twice I thought to roar,
To break my chain, to shake my mane: but thou,
Modulate me, Soul of mincing mimicry!
Make liquid treble of that bassoon, my throat;
Abase those eyes that ever loved to meet
Star-sisters answering under crescent brows;
Abate the stride, which speaks of man, and loose
A flying charm of blushes o'er this cheek,
Where they like swallows coming out of time
Will wonder why they came: but hark the bell
For dinner, let us go!"

And in we streamed
Among the columns, pacing staid and still
By twos and threes, till all from end to end
With beauties every shade of brown and fair,
In colors gayer than the morning mist,
The long hall glittered like a bed of flowers.
How might a man not wander from his wits,
Pierced through with eyes, but that I kept mine own
Intent on her, who rapt in glorious dreams
The second-sight of some Astræan age,
Sat compassed with professors: they, the while,
Discussed a doubt, and tossed it to and fro:
A clamor thickened, mixed with inmost terms
Of art and science; Lady Blanche alone,
Of faded form and haughtiest lineaments,
With all her Autumn tresses falsely brown,
Shot sidelong daggers at us, a tiger-cat
In act to spring.

At last a solemn grace
Concluded, and we sought the gardens: there
One walked reciting by herself, and one
In this hand held a volume as to read,

And smoothed a petted peacock down with that:
Some to a low song oared a shallop by,
Or under arches of the marble bridge
Hung, shadowed from the heat: some hid and sought
In the orange thickets: others tost a ball
Above the fountain-jets, and back again
With laughter: others lay about the lawns,
Of the older sort, and murmured that their May
Was passing: what was learning unto them?
They wished to marry; they could rule a house;
Men hated learned women: but we three
Sat muffled like the Fates; and often came
Melissa, hitting all we saw with shafts
Of gentle satire, kin to charity,
That harmed not: then day droopt; the chapel bells
Called us: we left the walks; we mixt with those
Six hundred maidens, clad in purest white,
Before two streams of light from wall to wall,
While the great organ almost burst his pipes,
Groaning for power, and rolling through the court
A long melodious thunder to the sound
Of solemn psalms and silver litanies,
The work of Ida, to call down from Heaven
A blessing on her labors for the world.

Sweet and low, sweet and low,
Wind of the western sea,
Low, low, breathe and blow,
Wind of the western sea!
Over the rolling waters go,
Come from the dying moon, and blow,
Blow him again to me;
While my little one, while my pretty one, sleeps

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,
Father will come to thee soon;

Rest, rest, on mother's breast,
Father will come to thee soon;
Father will come to his babe in the nest,
Silver sails all out of the west,
Under the silver moon;
Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep.

III.

Morn in the white wake of the morning star
Came furrowing all the orient into gold.
We rose, and each by other drest with care
Descended to the court that lay three parts
In shadow, but the Muses' heads were touched
Above the darkness from their native East.

There while we stood beside the fount, and watched
Or seemed to watch the dancing bubble, approached
Melissa, tinged with wan from lack of sleep,
Or grief, and glowing round her dewy eyes
The circled Iris of a night of tears;
"And fly," she cried, "O fly, while yet you may!
My mother knows:" and when I asked her "how,"
"My fault," she wept, "my fault! and yet not mine:
Yet mine in part. O hear me, pardon me!
My mother, 'tis her wont from night to night
To rail at Lady Psyche and her side.
She says the Princess should have been the Head,
Herself and Lady Psyche the two arms;
And so it was agreed when first they came;
But Lady Psyche was the right hand now,
And she the left, or not, or seldom used;
Hers more than half the students, all the love.
And so last night she fell to canvass you:
Her country women! she did not envy her.
'Who ever saw such wild barbarians?

Girls?—more like men!' and at these words the
snake,
My secret, seemed to stir within my breast;
And oh, Sirs, could I help it, but my cheek
Began to burn and burn, and her lynx eye
To fix and make me hotter, till she laughed:
'O marvellously modest maiden, you!
Men! girls, like men! why, if they had been men,
You need not set your thoughts in rubric thus
For wholesale comment.' Pardon, I am shamed
That I must needs repeat for my excuse
What looks so little graceful: 'men' (for still
My mother went revolving on the word)
'And so they are,—very like men indeed—
And with that woman closeted for hours.'
Then came these dreadful words out one by one,
'Why—these—*are*—men:' I shuddered: 'and
you know it!'
'O ask me nothing,' I said: 'And she knows too,
And she conceals it!' So my mother clutched
The truth at once, but with no word from me;
And now thus early risen she goes to inform
The Princess: Lady Psyche will be crushed;
But you may yet be saved, and therefore fly:
But heal me with your pardon ere you go."

"What pardon, sweet Melissa, for a blush?"
Said Cyril: "Pale one, blush again: than wear
Those lilies, better blush our lives away.
Yet let us breathe for one hour more in Heaven,"
He added, "lest some classic Angel speak
In scorn of us, 'They mounted, Ganymedes,
To tumble, Vulcans, on the second morn.'
But I will melt this marble into wax
To yield us further furlough:" and he went.

Melissa shook her doubtful curls, and thought
He scarce would prosper. "Tell us," Florian asked,
"How grew this feud betwixt the right and left."

"O long ago," she said, "betwixt these two
Division smoulders hidden: 'tis my mother,
Too jealous, often fretful as the wind
Pent in a crevice: much I bear with her:
I never knew my father, but she says
(God help her!) she was wedded to a fool;
And still she railed against the state of things.
She had the care of Lady Ida's youth,
And from the Queen's decease she brought her up.
But when your sister came she won the heart
Of Ida: they were still together, grew
(For so they said themselves) inosculated;
Consonant chords that shiver to one note:
One mind in all things: yet my mother still
Affirms your Psyche thieved her theories,
And angled with them for her pupil's love:
She calls her plagiarist; I know not what:
But I must go: I dare not tarry," and light
As flies the shadow of a bird she fled.

Then murmured Florian, gazing after her:
"An open-hearted maiden, true and pure.
If I could love, why this were she: how pretty
Her blushing was, and how she blushed again,
As if to close with Cyril's random wish:
Not like your Princess crammed with erring pride,
Nor like poor Psyche whom she drags in tow."

"The crane," I said, "may chatter of the crane,
The dove may murmur of the dove, but I
An eagle clang an eagle to the sphere.
My Princess, oh my Princess! true she errs,
But in her own grand way: being herself
Three times more noble than threescore of men
She sees herself in every woman else,
And so she wears her error like a crown
To blind the truth and me: for her, and her,
Hebes are they to hand ambrosia, mix
The nectar; but—ah she—whene'er she moves

The Samian Herè rises and she speaks
A Memnon smitten with the morning Sun."

So saying, from the court we paced, and gained
The terrace ranged along the Northern front,
And leaning there on those balusters, high
Above the empurpled champaign, drank the gale
That blown about the foliage underneath,
And sated with the innumerable rose,
Beat balm upon our eyelids. Hither came
Cyril, and yawning, "O hard task!" he cried,
"No fighting shadows here! I forced a way
Through solid opposition, crabbed and gnarled.
Better to clear prime forests, heave and thump
A league of street in summer solstice down,
Than hammer at this reverend gentlewoman.
I knocked, and bidden, entered; found her there
At point to move, and settled in her eyes
The green malignant light of coming storm.
Sir, I was courteous, every phrase well-oiled,
As man's could be; yet maiden-meek I prayed
Concealment: she demanded who we were,
And why we came? I fabled nothing fair,
But, your example pilot, told her all.
Up went the hushed amaze of hand and eye.
But when I dwelt upon your old affiance,
She answered sharply that I talked astray.
I urged the fierce inscription on the gate,
And our three lives. True—we had limed ourselves
With open eyes, and we must take the chance.
But such extremes, I told her, well might harm
The woman's cause. 'Not more than now,' she said,
'So puddled as it is with favoritism.'
I tried the mother's heart. Shame might befall
Melissa, knowing, saying not she knew:
Her answer was, 'Leave me to deal with that.'
I spoke of war to come and many deaths,
And she replied, her duty was to speak,
And duty duty, clear of consequences.

I grew discouraged, Sir; but since I knew
No rock so hard but that a little wave
May beat admission in a thousand years,
I recommenced; 'Decide not ere you pause.
I find you here but in the second place,
Some say the third—the authentic foundress you.
I offer boldly: we will seat you highest:
Wink at our advent: help my Prince to gain
His rightful bride, and here I promise you
Some palace in our own land, where you shall reign
The head and heart of all our fair she-world,
And your great name flow on with broadening time
Forever.' Well, she balanced this a little,
And told me she would answer us to-day,
Meantime be mute: thus much, nor more, I gained."

He ceasing, came a message from the Head.
"That afternoon the Princess rode to take
The dip of certain strata to the North.
Would we go with her? we should find the land
Worth seeing; and the river made a fall
Out yonder:" then she pointed on to where
A double hill ran up his furrowy forks
Beyond the thick-leaved platans of the vale.

Agreed to, this, the day fled on through all
Its range of duties to the appointed hour.
Then summoned to the porch we went. She stood
Among her maidens, higher by the head,
Her back against a pillar, her foot on one
Of those tame leopards. Kittenlike he rolled
And pawed about her sandal. I drew near:
I gazed. On a sudden my strange seizure came
Upon me, the weird vision of our house:
The Princess Ida seemed a hollow show,
Her gay-furred cats a painted fantasy,
Her college and her maidens empty masks,
And I myself the shadow of a dream,
For all things were and were not. Yet I felt

My heart beat thick with passion and with awe,
Then from my breast the involuntary sigh
Brake, as she smote me with the light of eyes
That lent my knee desire to kneel, and shook
My pulses, till to horse we got, and so
Went forth in long retinue following up
The river as it narrowed to the hills.

I rode beside her, and to me she said:
"O friend, we trust that you esteemed us not
Too harsh to your companion yestermorn;
Unwillingly we spake." "No—not to her,"
I answered, "but to one of whom we spake
Your Highness might have seemed the thing you say."
"Again?" she cried; "are you ambassadresses
From him to me? we give you, being strange,
A license: speak, and let the topic die."

I stammered that I knew him—could have wished—
"Our king expects—was there no precontract—
There is no truer-hearted—ah, you seem
All he prefigured, and he could not see
The bird of passage flying south but longed
To follow: surely, if your Highness keep
Your purport, you will shock him even to death,
Or baser courses, children of despair."

"Poor boy," she said, "can he not read—no books?
Quoit, tennis, ball—no games? nor deals in that
Which men delight in, martial exercise?
To nurse a blind ideal, like a girl,
Methinks he seems no better than a girl;
As girls were once, as we ourselves have been:
We had our dreams; perhaps he mixt with them:
We touch on our dead self, nor shun to do it,
Being other—since we learnt our meaning here,

To lift the woman's fallen divinity
Upon an even pedestal with man."

She paused, and added with a haughtier smile
"And as to precontracts, we move, my friend,
At no man's beck, but know ourselves and thee,
O Vashti, noble Vashti! Summoned out
She kept her state, and left the drunken king
To brawl at Shushan underneath the palms."

"Alas! your Highness breathes full East," I said,
"On that which leans to you. I know the Prince,
I prize his truth: and then how vast a work
To assail this gray preëminence of man!
You grant me license: might I use it? think,
Ere half be done, perchance your life may fail;
Then comes the feebler heiress of your plan,
And takes and ruins all; and thus your pains
May only make that footprint upon sand
Which old-recurring waves of prejudice
Resmooth to nothing: might I dread that you,
With only Fame for spouse and your great deeds
For issue, yet may live in vain, and miss,
Meanwhile, what every woman counts her due,
Love, children, happiness?"

And she exclaimed,
"Peace, you young savage of the Northern wild!
What! though your Prince's love were like a God's,
Have we not made ourself the sacrifice?
You are bold indeed: we are not talked to thus:
Yet will we say for children, would they grew
Like field-flowers everywhere! we like them well:
But children die; and let me tell you, girl,
Howe'er you babble, great deeds cannot die:
They with the sun and moon renew their light
Forever, blessing those that look on them:
Children—that men may pluck them from our hearts
Kill us with pity, break us with ourselves—

O—children—there is nothing upon earth
More miserable than she that has a son
And sees him err: nor would we work for fame;
Though she perhaps might reap the applause of
Great,
Who learns the one POU STO whence after-hands
May move the world, though she herself effect
But little: wherefore up and act, nor shrink
For fear our solid aim be dissipated
By frail successors. Would, indeed, we had been,
In lieu of many mortal flies, a race
Of giants, living, each, a thousand years,
That we might see our own work out, and watch
The sandy footprint harden into stone."

I answered nothing, doubtful in myself
If that strange Poet-princess with her grand
Imaginations might at all be won.
And she broke out, interpreting my thoughts:

"No doubt we seem a kind of monster to you:
We are used to that; for women, up till this
Cramped under worse than South-sea-isle taboo,
Dwarfs of the gynecæum, fail so far
In high desire, they know not, cannot guess
How much their welfare is a passion to us.
If we could give them surer, quicker proof—
O, if our end were less achievable
By slow approaches than by single act
Of immolation, any phase of death,
We were as prompt to spring against the pikes,
Or down the fiery gulf, as talk of it,
To compass our dear sisters' liberties."

She bowed as if to veil a noble tear;
And up we came to where the river sloped
To plunge in cataract, shattering on black blocks
A breadth of thunder. O'er it shook the woods,
And danced the color, and, below, stuck out

The bones of some vast bulk that lived and roared
Before man was. She gazed a while and said,
" As these rude bones to us, are we to her
That will be." " Dare we dream of that," I asked,
" Which wrought us, as the workman and his work
That practice betters ? " " How," she cried, " you love
The metaphysics ! read and earn our prize,
A golden broach : beneath an emerald plane
Sits Diotima, teaching him that died
Of hemlock ; our device ; wrought to the life ;
She rapt upon her subject, he on her :
For there are schools for all." " And yet," I said,
" Methinks I have not found among them all
One anatomic." " Nay, we thought of that,"
She answered, " but it pleased us not : in truth
We shudder but to dream our maids should ape
Those monstrous males that carve the living hound,
And cram him with the fragments of the grave,
Or in the dark dissolving human heart,
And holy secrets of this microcosm,
Dabbling a shameless hand with shameful jest,
Encarnalize their spirits : yet we know
Knowledge is knowledge, and this matter hangs :
Howbeit ourself, foreseeing casualty,
Nor willing men should come among us, learnt,
For many weary moons before we came,
This craft of healing. Were you sick, ourself
Would tend upon you. To your question now,
Which touches on the workman and his work.
Let there be light, and there was light : 'tis so :
For was, and is, and will be, are but is ;
And all creation is one act at once,
The birth of light : but we that are not all,
As parts, can see but parts, now this, now that,
And live, perforce, from thought to thought, and make
One act a phantom of succession : thus
Our weakness somehow shapes the shadow, Time ;

But in the shadow will we work, and mould
The woman to the fuller day."
She spake
With kindled eyes: we rode a league beyond,
And o'er a bridge of pinewood crossing, came
On flowery levels underneath the crag,
Full of all beauty. "O how sweet," I said,
(For I was half oblivious of my mask,)
"To linger here with one that loved us!" "Yea,
She answered, "or with fair philosophies
That lift the fancy; for indeed these fields
Are lovely, lovelier not the Elysian lawns,
Where paced the Demigods of old, and saw
The soft white vapor streak the crowned towers
Built to the Sun:" then, turning to her maids,
"Pitch our pavilion here upon the sward;
Lay out the viands." At the word, they raised
A tent of satin, elaborately wrought
With fair Corinna's triumph: here she stood,
Engirt with many a florid maiden-cheek,
The woman-conqueror; woman-conquered there
The bearded Victor of ten thousand hymns,
And all the men mourned at his side: but we
Set forth to climb; then, climbing, Cyril kept
With Psyche, with Melissa Florian, I
With mine affianced. Many a little hand
Glanced like a touch of sunshine on the rocks,
Many a light foot shone like a jewel set
In the dark crag: and then we turned, we wound
About the cliffs, the copses, out and in,
Hammering and clinking, chattering stony names
Of shale and hornblende, rag and trap and tuff,
Amygdaloid and trachyte, till the Sun
Grew broader toward his death and fell, and all
The rosy heights came out above the lawns.

The splendor falls on castle walls
And snowy summits old in story;

The long light shakes across the lakes,
And the wild cataract leaps in glory.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying:
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying

O hark, O hear! how thin and clear,
And thinner, clearer, farther going;
O sweet and far, from cliff and scar,
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!
Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying:
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,
They faint on hill or field or river:
Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
And grow forever and forever.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.

IV.

"THERE sinks the nebulous star we call the Sun,
If that hypothesis of theirs be sound,"
Said Ida; "let us down and rest:" and we
Down from the lean and wrinkled precipices,
By every coppice-feathered chasm and cleft,
Dropt through the ambrosial gloom to where below,
No bigger than a glow-worm, shone the tent
Lamp-lit from the inner. Once she leaned on me,
Descending; once or twice she lent her hand,
And blissful palpitations in the blood,
Stirring a sudden transport, rose and fell.

But when we planted level feet, and dipt
Beneath the satin dome and entered in,
There leaning deep in broidered down we sank
Our elbows: on a tripod in the midst
A fragrant flame rose, and before us glowed
Fruit, blossom, viand, amber wine and gold.

Then she, "Let some one sing to us; lightlier move
The minutes fledged with music;" and a maid.
Of those beside her, smote her harp, and sang.

"Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,
Tears from the depth of some divine despair
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
In looking on the happy Autumn-fields,
And thinking of the days that are no more.

"Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,
That brings our friends up from the underworld,
Sad as the last which reddens over one
That sinks with all we love below the verge;
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

"Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns
The earliest pipe of half-awakened birds
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
The casement slowly grows a glimmering square;
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

"Dear as remembered kisses after death,
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feigned
On lips that are for others; deep as love,
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;
O Death in Life, the days that are no more."

She ended with such passion that the tear,
She sang of, shook and fell, an erring pearl
Lost in her bosom: but with some disdain
Answered the Princess, "If indeed there haunt
About the mouldered lodges of the Past
So sweet a voice and vague, fatal to men,
Well needs it we should cram our ears with wool
And so pace by: but thine are fancies hatched
In silken-folded idleness; nor is it
Wiser to weep a true occasion lost,

But trim our sails, and let old bygones be,
While down the streams that float us each and all
To the issue, goes, like glittering bergs of ice,
Throne after throne, and molten on the waste
Becomes a cloud: for all things serve their time
Toward that great year of equal mights and rights,
Nor would I fight with iron laws, in the end
Found golden: let the past be past; let be
Their cancelled Babels: though the rough kex
break
The starred mosaic, and the wild goat hang
Upon the shaft, and the wild fig-tree split
Their monstrous idols, care not while we hear
A trumpet in the distance pealing news
Of better, and Hope, a poising eagle, burns
Above the unrisen morrow: " then to me;
" Know you no song of your own land," she said,
" Not such as moans about the retrospect,
But deals with the other distance and the hues
Of promise; not a death's head at the wine."

Then I remembered one myself had made
What time I watched the swallow winging south
From mine own land, part made long since, and
part
Now while I sang; and maidenlike as far
As I could ape their treble, did I sing.

" O Swallow, Swallow, flying South,
Fly to her, and fall upon her gilded eaves,
And tell her, tell her what I tell to thee.

" O tell her, Swallow, thou that knowest each,
That bright and fierce and fickle is the South,
And dark and true and tender is the North.

" O Swallow, Swallow, if I could follow, and light
Upon her lattice, I would pipe and trill,
And cheep and twitter twenty million loves.

"O were I thou that she might take me in,
And lay me on her bosom, and her heart
Would rock the snowy cradle till I died.

"Why lingereth she to clothe her heart with love,
Delaying as the tender ash delays
To clothe herself, when all the woods are green?

"O tell her, Swallow, that thy brood is flown:
Say to her, I do but wanton in the South,
But in the North long since my nest is made.

"O tell her, brief is life but love is long,
And brief the sun of summer in the North,
And brief the moon of beauty in the South.

"O Swallow, flying from the golden woods,
Fly to her, and pipe and woo her, and make her mine,
And tell her, tell her, that I follow thee."

I ceased, and all the ladies, each at each,
Like the Ithacensian suitors in old time,
Stared with great eyes, and laughed with alien lips,
And knew not what they meant; for still my voice
Rang false: but smiling, "Not for thee," she said,
"O Bulbul, any rose of Gulistan
Shall burst her veil: marsh-divers, rather, maid,
Shall croak thee sister, or the meadow-crake
Grate her harsh kindred in the grass: and this
A mere love-poem! O for such, my friend,
We hold them slight: they mind us of the time
When we made bricks in Egypt. Knaves are men,
That lute and flute fantastic tenderness,
And dress the victim to the offering up,
And paint the gates of Hell with Paradise,
And play the slave to gain the tyranny.
Poor soul! I had a maid of honor once;
She wept her true eyes blind for such a one,

A rogue of canzonets and serenades.
I loved her. Peace be with her. She is dead.
So they blaspheme the muse! but great is song
Used to great ends: ourself have often tried
Valkyrian hymns, or into rhythm have dashed
The passion of the prophetess: for song
Is duer unto freedom, force, and growth
Of spirit, than to junketing and love.
Love is it? Would this same mock-love and this
Mock-Hymen were laid up like winter bats,
Till all men grew to rate us at our worth,
Not vassals to be beat, nor pretty babes
To be dandled, no, but living wills, and sphered
Whole in ourselves, and owed to none. Enough!
But now to leaven play with profit, you,
Know you no song, the true growth of your soil,
That gives the manners of your countrywomen?"

She spoke, and turned her sumptuous head with eyes
Of shining expectation fixt on mine.
Then while I dragged my brains for such a song,
Cyril, with whom the bell-mouthed flask had wrought,
Or mastered by the sense of sport, began
To troll a careless, careless tavern-catch
Of Moll and Meg, and strange experiences
Unmeet for ladies. Florian nodded at him,
I frowning; Psyche flushed and wanned and shook;
The lily-like Melissa drooped her brows;
"Forbear," the Princess cried; "Forbear, Sir," I;
And heated through and through with wrath and love,
I smote him on the breast; he started up;
There rose a shriek as of a city sacked;
Melissa clamored, "Flee the death!" "To horse!"
Said Ida; "home! to horse!" and fled, as flies
A troop of snowy doves athwart the dusk,
When some one batters at the dovecote doors,

Disorderly the women. Alone I stood
With Florian, cursing Cyril, vext at heart,
In the pavilion: there like parting hopes
I heard them passing from me: hoof by hoof,
And every hoof a knell to my desires,
Clanged on the bridge; and then another shriek,
"The Head, the Head, the Princess, oh the Head!"
For blind with rage she missed the plank, and rolled
In the river. Out I sprang from glow to gloom:
There whirled her white robe like a blossomed branch
Rapt to the horrible fall: a glance I gave,
No more; but woman-vested as I was,
Plunged; and the flood drew; yet I caught her; then
Oaring one arm, and bearing in my left
The weight of all the hopes of half the world,
Strove to buffet to land in vain. A tree
Was half-disrooted from his place, and stooped
To drench his dark locks in the gurgling wave
Mid-channel. Right on this we drove and caught,
And grasping down the boughs I gained the shore.

There stood her maidens glimmeringly grouped
In the hollow bank. One reaching forward drew
My burthen from mine arms; they cried "She lives!"
They bore her back into the tent; but I,
So much a kind of shame within me wrought,
Not yet endured to meet her opening eyes,
Nor found my friends; but pushed alone on foot
(For since her horse was lost I left her mine)
Across the woods, and less from Indian craft
Than beelike instinct hiveward, found at length
The garden portals. Two great statues, Art
And Science, Caryatids, lifted up
A weight of emblem, and betwixt were valves
Of open-work in which the hunter rued

His rash intrusion, manlike, but his brows
Had sprouted, and the branches thereupon
Spread out at top, and grimly spiked the gates.

A little space was left between the horns,
Through which I clambered o'er at top with pain,
Dropt on the sward, and up the linden walks,
And, tost on thoughts that changed from hue to hue,
Now poring on the glow-worm, now the star,
I paced the terrace, till the bear had wheeled
Through a great arc his seven slow suns.

A step
Of lightest echo, then a loftier form
Than female, moving through the uncertain gloom,
Disturbed me with the doubt "if this were she,"
But it was Florian. "Hist, O hist," he said,
"They seek us: out so late is out of rules.
Moreover, 'seize the strangers' is the cry.
How came you here?" I told him. "I," said he,
"Last of the train, a moral leper, I,
To whom none spake, half-sick at heart, returned.
Arriving all confused among the rest,
With hooded brows I crept into the hall,
And, couched behind a Judith, underneath
The head of Holofernes peeped and saw.
Girl after girl was called to trial: each
Disclaimed all knowledge of us: last of all,
Melissa: trust me, Sir, I pitied her.
She, questioned if she knew us men, at first
Was silent; closer prest, denied it not:
And then, demanded if her mother knew,
Or Psyche, she affirmed not, or denied:
From whence the Royal mind, familiar with her,
Easily gathered either guilt. She sent
For Psyche, but she was not there; she called
For Psyche's child to cast it from the doors;
She sent for Blanche to accuse her face to face;
And I slipt out: but whither will you now?

And where are Psyche, Cyril? both are fled.
What, if together? that were not so well.
Would rather we had never come! I dread
His wildness, and the chances of the dark."

"And yet," I said, "you wrong him more than I
That struck him: this is proper to the clown,
Though smocked, or furred and purpled, still the clown,
To harm the thing that trusts him, and to shame
That which he says he loves: for Cyril, howe'er
He deal in frolic, as to-night—the song
Might have been worse and sinned in grosser lips
Beyond all pardon—as it is, I hold
These flashes on the surface are not he.
He has a solid base of temperament:
But as the water-lily starts and slides,
Upon the level in little puffs of wind,
Though anchored to the bottom, such is he."

Scarce had I ceased, when from a tamarisk near
Two Proctors leapt upon us, crying, "Names."
He, standing still, was clutched; but I began
To thrid the musky-circled mazes, wind
And double in and out the boles, and race
By all the fountains: fleet I was of foot:
Before me showered the rose in flakes; behind
I heard the puffed pursuer; at mine ear
Bubbled the nightingale and heeded not,
And secret laughter tickled all my soul.
At last I hooked my ankle in a vine,
That clasped the feet of a Mnemosyne,
And falling on my face was caught and known.

They haled us to the Princess, where she sat
High in the hall: above her drooped a lamp,
And made the single jewel on her brow
Burn like the mystic fire on a mast-head,
Prophet of storm: a handmaid on each side

Rowed toward her, combing out her long black hair
Damp from the river ; and close behind her stood
Eight daughters of the plough, stronger than men,
Huge women, blowzed with health, and wind, and
rain,
And labor. Each was like a Druid rock ;
Or like a spire of land that stands apart
Cleft from the main, and wailed about with mews.

Then, as we came, the crowd dividing clove
An advent to the throne ; and there beside,
Half-naked as if caught at once from bed,
And tumbled on the purple footcloth, lay
The lily-shining child ; and on the left,
Bowed on her palms and folded up from wrong,
Her round white shoulder shaken with her sobs,
Melissa knelt ; but Lady Blanche, erect,
Stood up and spake, an affluent orator.

"It was not thus, oh Princess, in old days :
You prized my counsel, lived upon my lips :
I led you then to all the Castalies ;
I fed you with the milk of every Muse ;
I loved you like this kneeler, and you me,
Your second mother : those were gracious times.
Then came your new friend : you began to change—
I saw it and grieved—to slacken and to cool ;
Till taken with her seeming openness
You turned your warmer currents all to her,
To me you froze : this was my meed for all.
Yet I bore up in part from ancient love,
And partly that I hoped to win you back,
And partly conscious of my own deserts,
And partly that you were my civil head,
And chiefly you were born for something great
In which I might your fellow-worker be,
When time should serve ; and thus a noble scheme
Grew up from seed we two long since had sown :
In us true growth, in her a Jonah's gourd,

Up in one night and due to sudden sun:
We took this palace; but even from the first
You stood in your own light and darkened mine.
What student came but that you planed her path
To Lady Psyche, younger, not so wise,
A foreigner, and I your countrywoman,
I your old friend and tried, she new in all?
But still her lists were swelled and mine were lean;
Yet I bore up, in hope she would be known:
Then came these wolves: *they* knew her: *they* endured,
Long-closeted with her the yestermorn,
To tell her what they were, and she to hear:
And me none told: not less to an eye like mine,
A lidless watcher of the public weal,
Last night, their mask was patent, and my foot
Was to you: but I thought again: I feared
To meet a cold 'We thank you, we shall hear of it
From Lady Psyche:' you had gone to her,
She told, perforce; and winning easy grace,
No doubt for slight delay, remained among us
In our young nursery still unknown, the stem
Less grain than touchwood, while my honest heat
Were all miscounted as malignant haste
To push my rival out of place and power.
But public use required she should be known;
And since my oath was ta'en for public use,
I broke the letter of it to keep the sense.
I spoke not then at first, but watched them well,
Saw that they kept apart, no mischief done;
And yet this day (though you should hate me for it)
I came to tell you; found that you had gone,
Ridden to the hills, she likewise: now, I thought,
That surely she will speak; if not, then I.
Did she? these monsters blazoned what they were,
According to the coarseness of their kind,
For thus I hear; and known at last (my work)
And full of cowardice and guilty shame,

(I grant in her some sense of shame,) she flies;
And I remain on whom to wreak your rage,
I, that have lent my life to build up yours,
I, that have wasted here health, wealth and time
And talents, I—you know it—I will not boast:
Dismiss me, and I prophesy your plan,
Divorced from my experience, will be chaff
For every gust of chance, and men will say
We did not know the real light, but chased
The wisp that flickers where no foot can tread."

She ceased: the Princess answered coldly, "Good:
Your oath is broken: we dismiss you: go.
For this lost lamb (she pointed to the child)
Our mind is changed: we take it to ourselves."

Thereat the Lady stretched a vulture throat,
And shot from crooked lips a haggard smile.
"The plan was mine. I built the nest," she said,
"To hatch the cuckoo. Rise!" and stooped to updrag
Melissa: she, half on her mother propt,
Half-drooping from her, turned her face, and cast
A liquid look on Ida, full of prayer,
Which melted Florian's fancy as she hung,
A Niobëan daughter, one arm out,
Appealing to the bolts of Heaven; and while
We gazed upon her came a little stir
About the doors, and on a sudden rushed
Among us, out of breath, as one pursued,
A woman-post in flying raiment. Fear
Stared in her eyes, and chalked her face, and winged
Her transit to the throne, whereby she fell
Delivering sealed despatches, which the Head
Took half-amazed, and in her lion's mood
Tore open, silent we with blind surmise
Regarding, while she read, till over brow
And cheek and bosom brake the wrathful bloom
As of some fire against a stormy cloud,

When the wild peasant rights himself, the rick
Flames, and his anger reddens in the heavens;
For anger most it seemed, while now her breast,
Beaten with some great passion at her heart,
Palpitated, her hand shook, and we heard
In the dead hush the papers that she held
Rustle: at once the lost lamb at her feet
Sent out a bitter bleating for its dam;
The plaintive cry jarred on her ire; she crushed
The scrolls together, made a sudden turn
As if to speak, but, utterance failing her,
She whirled them on to me, as who should say
"Read," and I read—two letters—one her sire's.

"Fair daughter, when we sent the Prince your way
We knew not your ungracious laws, which learnt,
We, conscious of what temper you are built,
Came all in haste to hinder wrong, but fell
Into his father's hands, who has this night,
You lying close upon his territory,
Slipt round and in the dark invested you,
And here he keeps me hostage for his son."

The second was my father's, running thus:
"You have our son: touch not a hair of his head:
Render him up unscathed: give him your hand:
Cleave to your contract: though indeed we hear
You hold the woman is the better man;
A rampant heresy, such as if it spread
Would make all women kick against their Lords
Through all the world, and which might well deserve
That we this night should pluck your palace down;
And we will do it, unless you send us back
Our son, on the instant, whole."
So far I read;
And then stood up and spoke impetuously.

"O not to pry and peer on your reserve,
But led by golden wishes and a hope

The child of regal compact, did I break
Your precinct; not a scorner of your sex
But venerator, zealous it should be
All that it might be: hear me, for I bear,
Though man, yet human, whatsoe'er your wrongs,
From the flaxen curl to the gray lock a life
Less mine than yours: my nurse would tell me of you;
I babbled for you, as babies for the moon,
Vague brightness; when a boy, you stooped to me
From all high places, lived in all fair lights,
Came in long breezes rapt from inmost south,
And blown to inmost north; at eve and dawn
With Ida, Ida, Ida, rang the woods;
The leader wild-swan in among the stars
Would clang it, and lapt in wreaths of glow-worm light
The mellow breaker murmured Ida. Now,
Because I would have reached you, had you been
Sphered up with Cassiopëia, or the enthroned
Persephone in Hades, now at length,
Those winters of abeyance all worn out,
A man I came to see you: but, indeed,
Not in this frequence can I lend full tongue,
O noble Ida, to those thoughts that wait
On you, their centre: let me say but this,
That many a famous man and woman, town
And landskip, have I heard of, after seen
The dwarfs of presage; though when known, there grew
Another kind of beauty in detail
Made them worth knowing; but in you I found
My boyish dream involved and dazzled down
And mastered, while that after-beauty makes
Such head from act to act, from hour to hour,
Within me, that except you slay me here,
According to your bitter statute-book,
I cannot cease to follow you as they say
The seal does music; who desire you more

Than growing boys their manhood; dying lips,
With many thousand matters left to do,
The breath of life; oh, more than poor men wealth,
Than sick men health—yours, yours, not mine—but
half
Without you, with you, whole; and of those halves
You worthiest; and howe'er you block and bar
Your heart with system out from mine, I hold
That it becomes no man to nurse despair,
But in the teeth of clenched antagonisms
To follow up the worthiest till he die:
Yet that I came not all unauthorized,
Behold your father's letter."

On one knee
Kneeling, I gave it, which she caught, and dashed
Unopened at her feet: a tide of fierce
Invective seemed to wait behind her lips,
As waits a river level with the dam
Ready to burst and flood the world with foam:
And so she would have spoken, but there rose
A hubbub in the court of half the maids
Gathered together; from the illumined hall
Long lanes of splendor slanted o'er a press
Of snowy shoulders, thick as herded ewes,
And rainbow robes, and gems and gemlike eyes,
And gold and golden heads; they to and fro
Fluctuated, as flowers in storm, some red, some pale,
All open-mouthed, all gazing to the light,
Some crying there was an army in the land.
And some that men were in the very walls,
And some they cared not; till a clamor grew
As of a new-world Babel, woman-built,
And worse-confounded: high above them stood
The placid marble Muses, looking peace.

Not peace, she looked, the Head: but rising up
Robed in the long night of her deep hair, so
To the open window moved, remaining there

Fixt like a beacon-tower above the waves
Of tempest, when the crimson-rolling eye
Glares ruin, and the wild birds on the light
Dash themselves dead. She stretched her arms and called
Across the tumult, and the tumult fell:

"What fear ye, brawlers? am not I your Head?
On me, me, me, the storm first breaks: *I* dare
All these male thunderbolts: what is it ye fear?
Peace! there are those to avenge us, and they come:
If not,—myself were like enough, oh girls,
To unfurl the maiden banner of our rights,
And clad in iron burst the ranks of war,
Or, falling, protomartyr of our cause,
Die: yet I blame ye not so much for fear;
Six thousand years of fear have made ye that
From which I would redeem ye: but for those
That stir this hubbub—you and you—I know
Your faces there in the crowd—to-morrow morn
We hold a great convention: then shall they
That love their voices more than duty, learn
With whom they deal, dismissed in shame to live
No wiser than their mothers, household stuff,
Live chattels, mincers of each other's fame,
Full of weak poison, turnspits for the clown,
The drunkard's football, laughing-stocks of Time,
Whose brains are in their hands and in their heels,
But fit to flaunt, to dress, to dance, to thrum,
To tramp, to scream, to burnish, and to scour,
Forever slaves at home and fools abroad!"

She, ending, waved her hands: thereat the crowd
Muttering, dissolved: then with a smile, that looked
A stroke of cruel sunshine on the cliff
When all the glens are drowned in azure gloom
Of thunder-shower, she floated to us and said:

"You have done well and like a gentleman,
And like a prince: you have our thanks for all:
And you look well too in your woman's dress:
Well have you done, and like a gentleman.
You saved our life: we owe you bitter thanks:
Better have died and spilt our bones in the flood—
Then men had said—but now—What hinders me
To take such bloody vengeance on you both?—
Yet since our father—Wasps in our good hive,
You would-be quenchers of the light to be,
Barbarians, grosser than your native bears—
O would I had his sceptre for one hour!
You that have dared to break our bound, and gulled
Our servants, wronged and lied and thwarted us—
I wed with thee! *I* bound by precontract
Your bride, your bondslave! not though all the gold
That veins the world were packed to make your crown,
And every spoken tongue should lord you! Sir,
Your falsehood and yourself are hateful to us:
I trample on your offers and on you:
Begone! we will not look upon you more.
Here, push them out at gates!"
In wrath she spake.
Then those eight mighty daughters of the plough
Bent their broad faces toward us and addressed
Their motion: twice I sought to plead my cause,
But on my shoulder hung their heavy hands,
The weight of destiny: so from her face
They pushed us, down the steps, and through the court,
And with grim laughter thrust us out at gates.

We crossed the street, and gained a petty mound
Beyond it, whence we saw the lights and heard
The voices murmuring. While I listened came
On a sudden the weird seizure and the doubt:
I seemed to move among a world of ghosts;

The Princess with her monstrous woman-guard,
The jest and earnest working side by side,
The cataract, and the tumult, and the kings
Were shadows; and the long fantastic night
With all its doings had and had not been,
And all things were and were not.
This went by
As strangely as it came, and on my spirits
Settled a gentle cloud of melancholy;
Not long; I shook it off; for spite of doubts
And sudden ghostly shadowings I was one
To whom the touch of all mischance but came
As night to him that sitting on a hill
Sees the midsummer, midnight, Norway sun,
Set into sunrise: then we moved away.

Thy voice is heard through rolling drums
That beat to battle where he stands;
Thy face across his fancy comes,
And gives the battle to his hands:
A moment, while the trumpets blow,
He sees his brood about thy knee;
The next, like fire he meets the foe,
And strikes him dead for thine and thee.

So Lilia sang: we thought her half-possessed,
She struck such warbling fury through the words;
And, after, feigning pique at what she called
The raillery, or grotesque, or false sublime—
Like one that wishes at a dance to change
The music—clapt her hands and cried for war,
Or some grand fight to kill and make an end:
And he that next inherited the tale,
Half turning to the broken statue, said,
"Sir Ralph has got your colors: if I prove
Your knight and fight your battle, what for me?"
It chanced her empty glove upon the tomb
Lay by her like a model of her hand.
She took it and she flung it. "Fight," she said,

"And make us all we would be, great and good."
He knightlike in his cap instead of casque,
A cap of Tyrol borrowed from the hall,
Arranged the favor and assumed the Prince.

V.

Now scarce three paces measured from the mound
We stumbled on a stationary voice,
And "Stand, who goes?" "Two from the palace," I.
"The second two: they wait," he said, "pass on;
His Highness wakes:" and one, that clashed in arms
By glimmering lanes and walls of canvas, led
Threading the soldier-city, till we heard
The drowsy folds of our great ensign shake
From blazoned lions o'er the imperial tent
Whispers of war.

Entering, the sudden light
Dazed me half-blind: I stood and seemed to hear,
As in a poplar grove when a light wind wakes
A lisping of the innumerous leaf and dies,
Each hissing in his neighbor's ear; and then
A strangled titter, out of which there brake
On all sides, clamoring etiquette to death,
Unmeasured mirth; while now the two old kings
Began to wag their baldness up and down,
The fresh young captains flashed their glittering teeth;
The huge bush-bearded Barons heaved and blew,
And slain with laughter rolled the gilded Squire.

At length my Sire, his rough cheek wet with tears,
Panted from weary sides, "King, you are free!
We did but keep you surety for our son,

If this be he,—or a draggled mawkin, thou,
That tends her bristled grunters in the sludge:"
For I was drenched with ooze, and torn with briers,
More crumpled than a poppy from the sheath,
And all one rag, disprinced from head to heel:
Then some one sent beneath his vaulted palm
A whispered jest to some one near him, "Look,
He has been among his shadows." "Satan take
The old women and their shadows! (thus the king
Roared) make yourself a man to fight with men.
Go: Cyril told us all."

As boys that slink
From ferule and the trespass-chiding eye,
Away we stole, and transient in a trice
From what was left of faded woman-slough
To sheathing splendors and the golden scale
Of harness, issued in the sun that now
Leapt from the dewy shoulders of the Earth,
And hit the northern hills. Here Cyril met us,
A little shy at first, but by and by
We twain, with mutual pardon asked and given
For stroke and song, resoldered peace, whereon
Followed his tale. Amazed he fled away
Through the dark land, and later in the night
Had come on Psyche weeping: "then we fell
Into your father's hand, and there she lies,
But will not speak, nor stir."

He showed a tent
A stone-shot off: we entered in, and there
Among piled arms and rough accoutrements,
Pitiful sight, wrapt in a soldier's cloak,
Like some sweet sculpture draped from head to foot,
And pushed by rude hands from its pedestal,
All her fair length upon the ground she lay:
And at her head a follower of the camp,
A charred and wrinkled piece of womanhood,
Sat watching like a watcher by the dead.

Then Florian knelt, and "Come," he whispered to her,
"Lift up your head, sweet sister: lie not thus.
What have you done but right? you could not slay
Me, nor your prince: look up: be comforted:
Sweet is it to have done the thing one ought,
When fallen in darker ways." And likewise I:
"Be comforted: have I not lost her too,
In whose least act abides the nameless charm
That none has else for me." She heard, she moved,
She moaned, a folded voice; and up she sat,
And raised the cloak from brows as pale and smooth
As those that mourn half-shrouded over death
In deathless marble, "Her," she said, "my friend—
Parted from her—betrayed her cause and mine—
Where shall I breathe? why kept ye not your faith?
O base and bad! what comfort? none for me!"
To whom remorseful Cyril, "Yet I pray
Take comfort: live, dear lady, for your child,"
At which she lifted up her voice and cried.

"Ah me, my babe, my blossom, ah my child,
My one sweet child, whom I shall see no more!
For now will cruel Ida keep her back;
And either she will die from want of care,
Or sicken with ill usage, when they say
The child is hers—for every little fault,
The child is hers; and they will beat my girl,
Remembering her mother: oh my flower!
Or they will take her, they will make her hard,
And she will pass me by in after-life
With some cold reverence worse than were she dead.
Ill mother that I was to leave her there,
To lag behind, scared by the cry they made,
The horror of the shame among them all:
But I will go and sit beside the doors,

And make a wild petition night and day,
Until they hate to hear me like a wind
Wailing forever, till they open to me,
And lay my little blossom at my feet,
My babe, my sweet Aglaïa, my one child:
And I will take her up and go my way,
And satisfy my soul with kissing her:
Ah! what might that man not deserve of me,
Who gave me back my child?" "Be comforted,"
Said Cyril, "you shall have it:" but again
She veiled her brows, and prone she sank, and so
Like tender things that being caught feign death,
Spoke not, nor stirred.

By this a murmur ran
Through all the camp, and inward raced the scouts
With rumor of Prince Arac hard at hand.
We left her by the woman, and without
Found the gray kings at parle: and "Look you," cried
My father, "that our compact be fulfilled:
You have spoilt this child; she laughs at you and man:
She wrongs herself, her sex, and me, and him.
But red-faced war has rods of steel and fire;
She yields, or war."
Then Gama turned to me:
"We fear, indeed, you spent a stormy time
With our strange girl: and yet they say that still
You love her. Give us, then, your mind at large:
How say you, war or not?"

"Not war, if possible,
O King," I said, "lest from the abuse of war,
The desecrated shrine, the trampled year,
The smouldering homestead, and the household flower
Torn from the lintel—all the common wrong—
A smoke go up through which I loom to her

Three times a monster: now she lightens scorn
At him that mars her plan, but then would hate
(And every voice she talked with ratify it,
And every face she looked on justify it)
The general foe. More soluble is this knot
By gentleness than war. I want her love.
What were I nigher this, although we dashed
Your cities into shards with catapults;
She would not love;—or brought her chained, a slave,
The lifting of whose eyelash is my lord,
Not ever would she love; but brooding turn
The book of scorn, till all my little chance
Were caught within the record of her wrongs,
And crushed to death; and rather, Sire, than this,
I would the old God of war himself were dead,
Forgotten, rusting on his iron hills,
Rotting on some wild shore with ribs of wreck,
Or like an old-world mammoth bulked in ice,
Not to be molten out."

And roughly spake
My father, "Tut, you know them not, the girls.
Boy, when I hear you prate I almost think
That idiot legend credible. Look you, Sir!
Man is the hunter; woman is his game;
The sleek and shining creatures of the chase,
We hunt them for the beauty of their skins;
They love us for it, and we ride them down.
Wheedling and siding with them! Out! for shame!
Boy, there's no rose that's half so dear to them
As he that does the thing they dare not do,
Breathing and sounding beauteous battle, comes
With the air of the trumpet round him, and leaps in
Among the women, snares them by the score,
Flattered and flustered, wins, though dashed with death
He reddens what he kisses; thus I won
Your mother, a good mother, a good wife,

Worth winning; but this firebrand—gentleness
To such as her! if Cyril spake her true,
To catch a dragon in a cherry net,
To trip a tigress with a gossamer,
Were wisdom to it."

"Yea, but Sire," I cried,
"Wild natures need wise curbs. The soldier? No:
What dares not Ida do that she should prize
The soldier? I beheld her, when she rose
The yesternight, and storming in extremes
Stood for her cause, and flung defiance down
Gagelike to man and had not shunned the death,
No, not the soldier's: yet I hold her, King,
True woman: but you clash them all in one,
That have as many differences as we.
The violet varies from the lily as far
As oak from elm: one loves the soldier, one
The silken priest of peace, one this, one that,
And some unworthily; their sinless faith,
A maiden moon that sparkles on a sty,
Glorifying clown and satyr; whence they need
More breadth of culture: is not Ida right?
They worth it? truer to the law within?
Severer in the logic of a life?
Twice as magnetic to sweet influences
Of Earth and Heaven? and she of whom you speak,
My mother, looks as whole as some serene
Creation minted in the golden moods
Of sovereign artists; not a thought, a touch,
But pure as lines of green that streak the white
Of the first snowdrop's inner leaves; I say
Not like the piebald miscellany, man,
Bursts of great heart and slips in sensual mire,
But whole and one: and take them all-in-all,
Were we ourselves but half as good, as kind,
As truthful, much that Ida claims as right
Had ne'er been mooted, but as frankly theirs

As dues of Nature. To our point: not war:
Lest I lose all."

"Nay, nay, you spake but sense,"
Said Gama. "We remember love ourselves
In our sweet youth: we did not rate him then
This red-hot iron to be shaped with blows.
You talk almost like Ida: she can talk;
And there is something in it as you say:
But you talk kindlier: we esteem you for it.—
He seems a gracious and a gallant prince,
I would he had our daughter: for the rest,
Our own detention, why the causes weighed,
Fatherly fears—you used us courteously—
We would do much to gratify your Prince—
We pardon it; and for your ingress here
Upon the skirt and fringe of our fair land,
You did but come as goblins in the night,
Nor in the furrow broke the ploughman's head,
Nor burnt the grange, nor bussed the milking-maid,
Nor robbed the farmer of his bowl of cream:
But let your Prince (our royal word upon it,
He comes back safe) ride with us to our lines,
And speak with Arac: Arac's word is thrice
As ours with Ida: something may be done—
I know not what—and ours shall see us friends.
You, likewise, our late guests, if so you will,
Follow us: who knows? we four may build some plan
Foursquare to opposition."

Here he reached
White hands of farewell to my sire, who growled
An answer which, half-muffled in his beard,
Let so much out as gave us leave to go.

Then rode we with the old king across the lawns
Beneath huge trees, a thousand rings of Spring
In every bole, a song on every spray
Of birds that piped their Valentines, and woke

Desire in me to infuse my tale of love
In the old king's ears, who promised help, and oozed
All o'er with honeyed answer as we rode;
And blossom-fragrant slipt the heavy dews,
Gathered by night and peace, with each light air
On our mailed heads: but other thoughts than Peace
Burnt in us, when we saw the embattled squares,
And squadrons of the Prince, trampling the flowers
With clamor: for among them rose a cry
As if to greet the king; they made a halt;
The horses yelled; they clashed their arms; the drum
Beat; merrily-blowing shrilled the martial fife;
And in the blast and bray of the long horn
And serpent-throated bugle, undulated
The banner: anon to meet us lightly pranced
Three captains out; nor ever had I seen
Such thews of men: the midmost and the highest
Was Arac: all about his motion clung
The shadow of his sister, as the beam
Of the East, that played upon them, made them glance
Like those three stars of the airy Giant's zone,
That glitter burnished by the frosty dark;
And as the fiery Sirius alters hue,
And bickers into red and emerald, shone
Their morions, washed with morning, as they came.

And I that prated peace, when first I heard
War-music, felt the blind wild beast of force
Whose home is in the sinews of a man
Stir in me as to strike; then took the king
His three broad sons; with now a wandering hand
And now a pointed finger, told them all:
A common light of smiles at our disguise
Broke from their lips, and, ere the windy jest
Had labored down within his ample lungs,

The genial giant, Arac, rolled himself
Thrice in the saddle, then burst out in words.

"Our land invaded, 'sdeath! and he himself
Your captive, yet my father wills not war:
And, 'sdeath! myself, what care I, war or no?
But then this question of your troth remains;
And there's a downright honest meaning in her;
She flies too high, she flies too high! and yet
She asked but space and fair play for her scheme;
She prest and prest it on me—I myself,
What know I of these things? but, life and soul,
I thought her half right talking of her wrongs;
I say she flies too high, 'sdeath! what of that?
I take her for the flower of womankind,
And so I often told her, right or wrong,
And, Prince, she can be sweet to those she loves,
And, right or wrong, I care not: this is all,
I stand upon her side: she made me swear it—
'Sdeath!—and with solemn rites by candle-light—
Swear by St. something—I forget her name—
Her that talked down the fifty wisest men;
She was a princess too; and so I swore.
Come, this is all; she will not: waive your claim:
If not, the foughten field, what else, at once
Decides it, 'sdeath! against my father's will."

I lagged in answer, loth to render up
My precontract, and loth by brainless war
To cleave the rift of difference deeper yet;
Till one of those two brothers, half aside
And fingering at the hair about his lip,
To prick us on to combat, "Like to like!
The woman's garment hid the woman's heart."
A taunt that clenched his purpose like a blow!
For fiery-short was Cyril's counter-scoff,
And sharp I answered, touched upon the point
Where idle boys are cowards to their shame,
"Decide it here: why not? we are three to three."

Then spake the third, "But three to three! no more?
No more, and in our noble sister's cause?
More, more, for honor: every captain waits
Hungry for honor, angry for his king.
More, more, some fifty on a side, that each
May breathe himself, and quick! by overthrow
Of these or those, the question settled, die."

"Yea," answered I, "for this wild wreath of air,
This flake of rainbow flying on the highest
Foam of men's deeds—this honor, if ye will.
It needs must be for honor if at all:
Since, what decision? if we fail, we fail,
And if we win, we fail: she would not keep
Her compact." "'Sdeath! but we will send to her,"
Said Arac; "worthy reasons why she should
Bide by this issue: let our missive through,
And you shall have her answer by the word."

"Boys!" shrieked the old king, but vainlier than a hen
To her false daughters in the pool; for none
Regarded; neither seemed there more to say:
Back rode we to my father's camp, and found
He thrice had sent a herald to the gates,
To learn if Ida yet would cede our claim,
Or by denial flush her babbling wells
With her own people's life: three times he went:
The first, he blew and blew, but none appeared.
He battered at the doors; none came: the next,
An awful voice within had warned him thence:
The third, and those eight daughters of the plough
Came sallying through the gates, and caught his hair,
And so belabored him on rib and cheek
They made him wild: not less one glance he caught
Through open doors of Ida stationed there

Unshaken, clinging to her purpose, firm
Though compassed by two armies and the noise
Of arms; and standing like a stately pine
Set in a cataract on an island-crag,
When storm is on the heights, and right and left
Sucked from the dark heart of the long hills roll
The torrents, dashed to the vale: and yet her will
Bred will in me to overcome it or fall.

But when I told the king that I was pledged
To fight in tourney for my bride, he clashed
His iron palms together with a cry;
Himself would tilt it out among the lads:
But overborne by all his bearded lords
With reasons drawn from age and state, perforce
He yielded, wroth and red, with fierce demur:
And many a bold knight started up in heat,
And sware to combat for my claim till death.

All on this side the palace ran the field
Flat to the garden-wall: and likewise here,
Above the garden's glowing blossom-belts,
A columned entry shone and marble stairs,
And great bronze valves, embossed with Tomyris
And what she did to Cyrus after fight,
But now fast barred: so here upon the flat
All that long morn the lists were hammered up,
And all that morn the heralds to and fro,
With message and defiance, went and came;
Last, Ida's answer, in a royal hand,
But shaken here and there, and rolling words
Oration-like. I kissed it and I read.

"O brother, you have known the pangs we felt,
What heats of indignation, when we heard
Of those that iron-cramped their women's feet;
Of lands in which at the altar the poor bride
Gives her harsh groom for bridal-gift a scourge;
Of living hearts that crack within the fire

Where smoulder their dead despots; and of those,—
Mothers,—that, all prophetic pity, fling
Their pretty maids in the running flood, and swoops
The vulture, beak and talon, at the heart
Made for all noble motion: and I saw
That equal baseness lived in sleeker times
With smoother men: the old leaven leavened all:
Millions of throats would bawl for civil rights,
No woman named: therefore I set my face
Against all men and lived but for mine own.
Far off from men I built a fold for them:
I stored it full of rich memorial:
I fenced it round with gallant institutes,
And biting laws to scare the beasts of prey,
And prospered; till a rout of saucy boys
Brake on us at our books, and marred our peace,
Masked like our maids, blustering I know not what
Of insolence and love, some pretext held
Of baby troth, invalid, since my will
Sealed not the bond—the striplings!—for their sport!
I tamed my leopards: shall I not tame these?
Or you? or I? for since you think me touched
In honor—what, I would not aught of false—
Is not our cause pure? and whereas I know
Your prowess, Arac, and what mother's blood
You draw from, fight; you failing, I abide
What end soever, fail you will not. Still
Take not his life: he risked it for my own;
His mother lives: yet whatsoe'er you do,
Fight and fight well; strike, and strike home. O dear
Brothers, the woman's Angel guards you, you
The sole men to be mingled with our cause,
The sole men we shall prize in the after time,
Your very armor hallowed, and your statues
Reared, sung to, when, this gad-fly brushed aside,
We plant a solid foot into the Time,
And mould a generation strong to move

With claim on claim from right to right, till she
Whose name is yoked with children's, know herself;
And knowledge in our own land make her free,
And, ever following those two crowned twins,
Commerce and conquest, shower the fiery grain
Of Freedom broadcast over all that orbs
Between the Northern and the Southern morn."

Then came a postcript dashed across the rest.
"See that there be no traitors in your camp:
We seem a nest of traitors—none to trust
Since our arms failed—this Egypt-plague of men!
Almost our maids were better at their homes,
Than thus man-girdled here: Indeed I think
Our chiefest comfort is the little child
Of one unworthy mother; which she left:
She shall not have it back: the child shall grow
To prize the authentic mother of her mind.
I took it for an hour in mine own bed,
This morning: there the tender orphan hands
Felt at my heart, and seemed to charm from thence
The wrath I nursed against the world: farewell."

I ceased; he said: "Stubborn, but she may sit
Upon a king's right hand in thunder-storms
And breed up warriors! See now, though yourself
Be dazzled by the wildfire Love to sloughs
That swallow common sense, the spindling king,
This Gama swamped in lazy tolerance.
When the man wants weight the woman takes it up,
And topples down the scales; but this is fixt
As are the roots of earth and base of all.
Man for the field, and woman for the hearth:
Man for the sword, and for the needle she:
Man with the head, and woman with the heart:
Man to command, and woman to obey;
All else confusion. Look you: the gray mare
Is ill to live with, when her whinny shrills

From tile to scullery, and her small goodman
Shrinks in his arm-chair, while the fires of Hell
Mix with his hearth: but you—she's yet a colt—
Take, break her: strongly groomed and straitly curbed,
She might not rank with those detestable
That let the bantling scald at home, and brawl
Their rights or wrongs like pot-herbs in the street.
They say she's comely; there's the fairer chance:
I like her none the less for rating at her!
Besides, the woman wed is not as we,
But suffers change of frame. A lusty brace
Of twins may weed her of her folly. Boy,
The bearing and the training of a child
Is woman's wisdom."

Thus the hard old king:
I took my leave, for it was nearly noon:
I pored upon her letter which I held,
And on the little clause, "take not his life:
I mused on that wild morning in the woods,
And on the "Follow, follow, thou shalt win:"
I thought on all the wrathful king had said,
And how the strange betrothment was to end:
Then I remembered that burnt sorcerer's curse,
That one should fight with shadows, and should fall
And like a flash the weird affection came:
King, camp and college turned to hollow shows;
I seemed to move in old memorial tilts,
And doing battle with forgotten ghosts,
To dream myself the shadow of a dream;
And ere I woke it was the point of noon,
The lists were ready. Empanoplied and plumed
We entered in, and waited, fifty there
Opposed to fifty, till the trumpet blared
At the barrier, like a wild horn in a land
Of echoes, and a moment, and once more
The trumpet, and again: at which the storm
Of galloping hoofs bare on the ridge of spears,

And riders front to front, until they closed
In conflict with the crash of shivering points,
And thunder. Yet it seemed a dream; I dreamed
Of fighting. On his haunches rose the steed,
And into fiery splinters leapt the lance,
And out of stricken helmets sprang the fire.
Part sat like rocks: part reeled but kept their seats:
Part rolled on the earth and rose again and drew:
Part stumbled, mixt with floundering horses. Down
From those two bulks at Arac's side, and down
From Arac's arm, as from a giant's flail,
The large blows rained, as here and everywhere
He rode the mellay, lord of the ringing lists,
And all the plain,—brand, mace, and shaft, and shield,
Shocked, like an iron-clanging anvil banged
With hammers; till I thought, can this be he
From Gama's dwarfish loins? if this be so,
The mother makes us most—and in my dream
I glanced aside, and saw the palace-front
Alive with fluttering scarfs and ladies' eyes,
And highest among the statues, statue-like,
Between a cymbaled Miriam and a Jael,
With Psyche's babe, was Ida watching us,
A single band of gold about her hair,
Like a Saint's glory up in heaven: but she
No saint—inexorable—no tenderness—
Too hard, too cruel: yet she sees me fight,
Yea, let her see me fall! with that I drave
Among the thickest, and bore down a Prince,
And Cyril one. Yea, let me make my dream
All that I would. But that large-moulded man,
His visage all agrin as at a wake,
Made at me through the press, and staggering back
With stroke on stroke the horse and horseman, came
As comes a pillar of electric cloud,
Flaying the roofs and sucking up the drains,
And shadowing down the champaign till it strikes

On a wood, and takes, and breaks, and cracks, and splits,
And twists the grain with such a roar that Earth
Reels and the herdsmen cry, for every thing
Gave way before him: only Florian, he
That loved me closer than his own right eye,
Thrust in between; but Arac rode him down:
And Cyril seeing it, pushed against the Prince,
With Psyche's color round his helmet, tough,
Strong, supple, sinew-corded, apt at arms;
But tougher, heavier, stronger, he that smote
And threw him: last I spurred; I felt my veins
Stretch with fierce heat; a moment hand to hand,
And sword to sword, and horse to horse, we hung,
Till I struck out and shouted; the blade glanced;
I did but shear a feather, and dream and truth
Flowed from me; darkness closed me; and I fell.

Home they brought her warrior dead:
She nor swooned, nor uttered cry:
All her maidens, watching, said,
"She must weep or she will die."

Then they praised him, soft and low,
Called him worthy to be loved,
Truest friend and noblest foe;
Yet she neither spoke nor moved.

Stole a maiden from her place,
Lightly to the warrior stept,
Took the face-cloth from the face:
Yet she neither moved nor wept.

Rose a nurse of ninety years,
Set his child upon her knee—
Like summer tempest came her tears—
"Sweet my child, I live for thee."

VI.

My dream had never died or lived again.
As in some mystic middle state I lay;
Seeing I saw not, hearing not I heard;
Though, if I saw not, yet they told me all
So often, that I speak as having seen.

For so it seemed, or so they said to me,
That all things grew more tragic and more strange;
That when our side was vanquished, and my cause
Forever lost, there went up a great cry,
The Prince is slain. My father heard and ran
In on the lists, and there unlaced my casque
And grovelled on my body, and after him
Came Psyche, sorrowing for Aglaïa.

But high upon the palace Ida stood
With Psyche's babe in arm: there on the roofs
Like that great dame of Lapidoth she sang.

"Our enemies have fallen, have fallen: the seed,
The little seed they laughed at in the dark,
Has risen and cleft the soil, and grown a bulk
Of spanless girth, that lays on every side
A thousand arms and rushes to the Sun.

"Our enemies have fallen, have fallen: they came;
The leaves were wet with women's tears: they heard
A noise of songs they would not understand.
They marked it with the red cross to the fall,
And would have strown it, and are fallen themselves.

"Our enemies have fallen, have fallen: they came,
The woodmen with their axes: lo the tree!
But we will make it fagots for the hearth,

And shape it plank and beam for roof and floor,
And boats and bridges for the use of men.

"Our enemies have fallen, have fallen: they struck;
With their own blows they hurt themselves, nor knew
There dwelt an iron nature in the grain:
The glittering axe was broken in their arms,
Their arms were shattered to the shoulder blade.

"Our enemies have fallen, but this shall grow
A night of Summer from the heat, a breadth
Of Autumn, dropping fruits of power; and rolled
With music in the growing breeze of Time,
The tops shall strike from star to star, the fangs
Shall move the stony bases of the world.

"And now, O maids, behold our sanctuary
Is violate, our laws broken: fear we not
To break them more in their behoof, whose arms
Championed our cause and won it with a day
Blanched in our annals, and perpetual feast,
When dames and heroines of the golden year
Shall strip a hundred hollows bare of Spring,
To rain an April of ovation round
Their statues, borne aloft, the three: but come,
We will be liberal, since our rights are won.
Let them not lie in the tents, with coarse mankind,
Ill nurses; but descend, and proffer these,
The brethren of our blood and cause, that there
Lie bruised and maimed, the tender ministries
Of female hands and hospitality."

She spoke, and with the babe yet in her arms,
Descending, burst the great bronze valves, and led
A hundred maids in train across the Park.
Some cowled, and some bareheaded, on they came,
Their feet in flowers, her loveliest: by them went

The enamored air sighing, and on their curls
From the high tree the blossom wavering fell,
And over them the tremulous isles of light
Slided, they moving under shade: but Blanche
At distance followed: so they came: anon
Through open field into the lists they wound
Timorously; and as the leader of the herd
That holds a stately fretwork to the Sun,
And followed up by a hundred airy does,
Steps with a tender foot, light as on air,
The lovely, lordly creature floated on
To where her wounded brethren lay; there stayed;
Knelt on one knee,—the child on one,—and prest
Their hands, and called them dear deliverers,
And happy warriors, and immortal names,
And said, "You shall not lie in the tents, but here,
And nursed by those for whom you fought, and
served
With female hands and hospitality."

Then, whether moved by this, or was it chance,
She past my way. Up started from my side
The old lion, glaring with his whelpless eye,
Silent; but when she saw me lying stark,
Dishelmed and mute, and motionlessly pale,
Cold even to her, she sighed; and when she saw
The haggard father's face and reverend beard
Of grisly twine, all dabbled with the blood
Of his own son, shuddered, a twitch of pain
Tortured her mouth, and o'er her forehead past
A shadow, and her hue changed, and she said:
"He saved my life: my brother slew him for it."
No more: at which the king in bitter scorn
Drew from my neck the painting and the tress,
And held them up: she saw them, and a day
Rose from the distance on her memory,
When the good queen, her mother, shore the tress
With kisses, ere the days of Lady Blanche:
And then once more she looked at my pale face:

Till understanding all the foolish work
Of Fancy, and the bitter close of all,
Her iron will was broken in her mind;
Her noble heart was molten in her breast;
She bowed, she set the child on the earth; she laid
A feeling finger on my brows, and presently
"O Sire," she said, "he lives: he is not dead:
O let me have him with my brethren here
In our own palace: we will tend on him
Like one of these; if so, by any means,
To lighten this great clog of thanks, that make
Our progress falter to the woman's goal."

She said: but at the happy word, "he lives,"
My father stooped, re-fathered o'er my wounds.
So those two foes above my fallen life,
With brow to brow like night and evening mixt
Their dark and gray, while Psyche ever stole
A little nearer, till the babe, that by us,
Half-lapt in glowing gauze and golden brede,
Lay like a new-fallen meteor on the grass,
Uncared for, spied its mother, and began
A blind and babbling laughter, and to dance
Its body, and reach its fatling innocent arms,
And lazy lingering fingers. She the appeal
Brooked not, but clamoring out "Mine—mine—
not yours,
It is not yours, but mine: give me the child,"
Ceased all on tremble: piteous was the cry:
So stood the unhappy mother open-mouthed,
And turned each face her way: wan was her cheek
With hollow watch, her blooming mantle torn,
Red grief and mother's hunger in her eye,
And down dead-heavy sank her curls, and half
The sacred mother's bosom, panting, burst
The laces toward her babe; but she nor cared
Nor knew it, clamoring on, till Ida heard,
Looked up, and rising slowly from me, stood
Erect and silent, striking with her glance

The mother, me, the child; but he that lay
Beside us, Cyril, battered as he was,
Trailed himself up on one knee: then he drew
Her robe to meet his lips, and down she looked
At the armed man sideways, pitying, as it seemed,
Or self-involved; but when she learnt his face,
Remembering his ill-omened song, arose
Once more through all her height, and o'er him grew
Tall as a figure lengthened on the sand
When the tide ebbs in sunshine, and he said:

"O fair and strong and terrible! Lioness
That with your long locks play the Lion's mane!
But Love and Nature, these are two more terrible
And stronger. See, your foot is on our necks,
We vanquished, you the Victor of your will.
What would you more? give her the child! remain
Orbed in your isolation: he is dead,
Or all as dead: henceforth we let you be:
Win you the hearts of women; and beware
Lest, where you seek the common love of these,
The common hate, with the revolving wheel,
Should drag you down, and some great Nemesis
Break from a darkened future, crowned with fire,
And tread you out forever: but howsoe'er
Fixed in yourself, never in your own arms
To hold your own, deny not hers to her,
Give her the child! O if, I say, you keep
One pulse that beats true woman, if you loved
The breast that fed or arm that dandled you,
Or own one part of sense not flint to prayer,
Give her the child! or if you scorn to lay it,
Yourself, in hands so lately clasped with yours,
Or speak to her, your dearest, her one fault
The tenderness, not yours, that could not kill,
Give *me* it; I will give it her."

He said:
At first her eye with slow dilation rolled

Dry flame, she listening; after sank and sank,
And, into mournful twilight mellowing, dwelt
Full on the child; she took it: "Pretty bud!
Lily of the vale! half-opened bell of the woods!
Sole comfort of my dark hour, when a world
Of traitorous friend and broken system made
No purple in the distance, mystery,
Pledge of a love not to be mine, farewell;
These men are hard upon us as of old,
We two must part: and yet how fain was I
To dream thy cause embraced in mine, to think
I might be something to thee, when I felt
Thy helpless warmth about my barren breast
In the dead prime: but may thy mother prove
As true to thee as false, false, false, to me!
And, if thou needs must bear the yoke, I wish it
Gentle as freedom"—here she kissed it: then—
"All good go with thee! take it, Sir," and so
Laid the soft babe in his hard-mailed hands,
Who turned half-round to Psyche as she sprang
To meet it, with an eye that swam in thanks,
Then felt it sound and whole from head to foot,
And hugged and never hugged it close enough,
And in her hunger mouthed and mumbled it,
And hid her bosom with it; after that
Put on more calm, and added suppliantly;

"We two were friends: I go to mine own land
Forever; find some other: as for me,
I scarce am fit for your great plans: yet speak to
me.
Say one soft word, and let me part forgiven."

But Ida spoke not, rapt upon the child.
Then Arac. "Ida—'sdeath! you blame the man;
You wrong yourselves—the woman is so hard
Upon the woman. Come, a grace to me!
I am your warrior; I and mine have fought
Your battle: kiss her; take her hand, she weeps:

'Sdeath! I would sooner fight thrice o'er than see it."

But Ida spoke not, gazing on the ground;
And reddening in the furrows of his chin,
And moved beyond his custom, Gama said:

"I've heard that there is iron in the blood,
And I believe it. Not one word? Not one?
Whence drew you this steel temper? not from me,
Not from your mother, now a saint with saints.
She said you had a heart—I heard her say it—
'Our Ida has a heart,'—just ere she died—
'But see that some one with authority
Be near her still,' and I—I sought for one—
All people said she had authority—
The Lady Blanche: much profit! Not one word;
No! though your father sues: see how you stand
Stiff as Lot's wife, and all the good knights maimed,
I trust that there is no one hurt to death,
For your wild whim: and was it, then, for this,
Was it for this we gave our palace up,
Where we withdrew from summer heats and state,
And had our wine and chess beneath the planes,
And many a pleasant hour with her that's gone,
Ere you were born to vex us? Is it kind?
Speak to her, I say: is this not she of whom,
When first she came, all flushed you said to me,
Now had you got a friend of your own age,
Now could you share your thought; now should men see
Two women faster welded in one love
Than pairs of wedlock; she you walked with, she
You talked with, whole nights long, up in the tower,
Of sine and arc, spheroïd and azimuth,
And right ascension, Heaven knows what; and now
A word, but one, one little kindly word,
Not one to spare her: out upon you, flint!
You love nor her, nor me, nor any; nay,

You shame your mother's judgment too. Not one?
You will not? well—no heart have you, or such
As fancies, like the vermin in a nut,
Have fretted all to dust and bitterness!"
So said the small king, moved beyond his wont.

But Ida stood nor spoke, drained of her force
By many a varying influence and so long:
Down through her limbs a drooping languor wept:
Her head a little bent; and on her mouth
A doubtful smile dwelt like a clouded moon
In a still water: then brake out my sire,
Lifting his grim head from my wounds: "O you,
Woman, whom we thought woman even now,
And were half-fooled to let you tend our son,
Because he might have wished it—but we see
The accomplice of your madness unforgiven,
And think that you might mix his draught with death,
When your skies change again: the rougher hand
Is safer: on to the tents: take up the Prince."

He rose, and while each ear was pricked to attend
A tempest, through the cloud that dimmed her broke
A genial warmth and light once more, and shone
Through glittering drops on her sad friend.

"Come hither,
O Psyche," she cried out, "embrace me, come,
Quick, while I melt; make reconcilement sure
With one that cannot keep her mind an hour:
Come to the hollow heart they slander so!
Kiss and be friends like children being chid!
I seem no more: *I* want forgiveness too:
I should have had to do with none but maids,
That have no links with men. Ah false but dear,
Dear traitor too much loved, why?—why?—Yet see

Before these kings we embrace you yet once more
With all forgiveness, all oblivion,
And trust not love you less.
And now, O Sire,
Grant me your son to nurse, to wait upon him,
Like mine own brother. For my debt to him,
This nightmare weight of gratitude, I know it;
Taunt me no more: yourself and yours shall have
Free adit; we will scatter all our maids
Till happier times, each to her proper hearth;
What use to keep them here, now? grant my prayer.
Help, father, brother, help; speak to the king:
Thaw this male nature to some touch of that
Which kills me with myself, and drags me down
From my fixt height to mob me up with all
The soft and milky rabble of womankind,
Poor weakling even as they are."

Passionate tears
Followed: the king replied not: Cyril said:
"Your brother, Lady,—Florian,—ask for him
Of your great head—for he is wounded too—
That you may tend upon him with the Prince."
"Ay so," said Ida, with a bitter smile,
"Our laws are broken: let him enter too."
Then Violet, she that sang the mournful song
And had a cousin tumbled on the plain,
Petitioned too for him. "Ay so," she said,
"I stagger in the stream: I cannot keep
My heart an eddy from the brawling hour:
We break our laws with ease, but let it be.'
"Ay so?" said Blanche: "amazed am I to hear
Your Highness: but your Highness breaks with ease
The law your Highness did not make: 'twas I.
I had been wedded wife, I knew mankind,
And blocked them out; but these men came to woo
Your Highness—verily I think to win."

So she, and turned askance a wintry eye:
But Ida, with a voice that like a bell
Tolled by an earthquake in a trembling tower
Rang ruin, answered full of grief and scorn:

"Fling our doors wide! all, all, not one, but all,
Not only he, but, by my mother's soul,
Whatever man lies wounded, friend or foe,
Shall enter, if he will. Let our girls flit
Till the storm die! but had you stood by us,
The roar that breaks the Pharos from his base
Had left us rock. She fain would sting us too,
But shall not. Pass, and mingle with your likes.
We brook no further insult, but are gone."

She turned; the very nape of her white neck
Was rosed with indignation: but the Prince
Her brother came; the king her father charmed
Her wounded soul with words; nor did mine own
Refuse her proffer, lastly gave his hand.

Then us they lifted up, dead weights, and bare
Straight to the doors: to them the doors gave way
Groaning, and in the vestal entry shrieked
The virgin marble under iron heels:
And on they moved and gained the hall, and there
Rested: but great the crush was, and each base,
To left and right, of those tall columns drowned
In silken fluctuation and the swarm
Of female whisperers: at the further end
Was Ida by the throne, the two great cats
Close by her like supporters on a shield
Bow-backed with fear: but in the centre stood
The common men with rolling eyes; amazed
They glared upon the women, and aghast
The women stared at these, all silent, save
When armor clashed or jingled, while the day,
Descending, struck athwart the hall, and shot
A flying splendor out of brass and steel,

That o'er the statues leaped from head to head,
Now fired an angry Pallas on the helm,
Now set a wrathful Dian's moon on flame,
And now and then an echo started up,
And shuddering fled from room to room, and died
Of fright in far apartments.

Then the voice
Of Ida sounded, issuing ordinance:
And me they bore up the broad stairs and through
The long-laid galleries past a hundred doors
To one deep chamber shut from sound, and due
To languid limbs and sickness; left me in it;
And others otherwhere they laid; and all
That afternoon a sound arose of hoof
And chariot, many a maiden passing home
Till happier times; but some were left of those
Held sagest, and the great lords out and in,
From those two hosts that lay beside the walls,
Walked at their will, and every thing was changed.

Ask me no more: the moon may draw the sea;
The cloud may stoop from heaven and take the shape,
With fold to fold, of mountain or of cape;
But, O too fond, when have I answered thee?
Ask me no more.

Ask me no more: what answer should I give?
I love not hollow cheek or faded eye:
Yet, O my friend, I will not have thee die!
Ask me no more, lest I should bid thee live;
Ask me no more.

Ask me no more: thy fate and mine are sealed:
I strove against the stream and all in vain:
Let the great river take me to the main:
No more, dear love, for at a touch I yield;
Ask me no more.

VII.

So was their sanctuary violated,
So their fair college turned to hospital;
At first with all confusion: by and by
Sweet order lived again with other laws:
A kindlier influence reigned; and everywhere
Low voices with the ministering hand
Hung round the sick: the maidens came, they talked,
They sang, they read: till she not fair, began
To gather light, and she that was, became
Her former beauty treble; and to and fro
With books, with flowers, with Angel offices,
Like creatures native unto gracious act,
And in their own clear element, they moved.

But sadness on the soul of Ida fell,
And hatred of her weakness, blent with shame.
Old studies failed: seldom she spoke; but oft
Clomb to the roofs, and gazed alone for hours
On that disastrous leaguer, swarms of men
Darkening her female field: void was her use;
And she as one that climbs a peak to gaze
O'er land and main, and sees a great black cloud
Drag inward from the deeps, a wall of night,
Blot out the slope of sea from verge to shore,
And suck the blinding splendor from the sand,
And quenching lake by lake and tarn by tarn
Expunge the world: so fared she gazing there;
So blackened all her world in secret, blank
And waste it seemed and vain; till down she came
And found fair peace once more among the sick.

And twilight dawned; and morn by morn the lark
Shot up and shrilled in flickering gyres, but I
Lay silent in the muffled cage of life:

And twilight gloomed; and broader grown the bowers
Drew the great night into themselves, and Heaven
Star after star arose and fell; but I,
Deeper than those weird doubts could reach me, lay
Quite sundered from the moving Universe,
Nor knew what eye was on me nor the hand
That nursed me, more than infants in their sleep.

But Psyche tended Florian: with her oft
Melissa came; for Blanche had gone, but left
Her child among us, willing she should keep
Court-favor: here and there the small bright head,
A light of healing, glanced about the couch,
Or through the parted silks the tender face
Peeped, shining in upon the wounded man
With blush and smile, a medicine in themselves
To wile the length from languorous hours and draw
The sting from pain; nor seemed it strange that soon
He rose up whole, and those fair charities
Joined at her side: nor stranger seemed that hearts
So gentle, so employed, should close in love,
Than when two dew-drops on the petal shake
To the same sweet air and tremble deeper down,
And slip at once all-fragrant into one.

Less prosperously the second suit obtained
At first with Psyche. Not though Blanche had sworn
That after that dark night among the fields,
She needs must wed him for her own good name;
Not though he built upon the babe restored;
Nor though she liked him, yielded she, but feared
To incense the Head once more; till on a day
When Cyril pleaded, Ida came behind
Seen but of Psyche. On her foot she hung
A moment and she heard, at which her face
A little flushed and she past on; but each

Assumed from thence a half-consent involved
In stillness, plighted troth, and were at peace.

Nor only these: Love in the sacred halls
Held carnival at will, and flying struck
With showers of random sweet on maid and man.
Nor did her father cease to press my claim,
Nor did mine own, now reconciled; nor yet
Did those twin brothers, risen again and whole;
Nor Arac, satiate with his victory.

But I lay still, and with me oft she sat:
Then came a change; for sometimes I would catch
Her hand in wild delirium, gripe it hard,
And fling it like a viper off, and shriek
"You are not Ida;" clasp it once again,
And call her Ida, though I knew her not,
And call her sweet, as if in irony,
And call her hard and cold which seemed a truth:
And still she feared that I should lose my mind,
And often she believed that I should die:
Till out of long frustration of her care,
And pensive tendance in the all-weary noons,
And watches in the dead, the dark, when clocks
Throbbed thunder through the palace floors, or called
On flying Time from all their silver tongues—
And out of memories of her kindlier days,
And sidelong glances at my father's grief,
And at the happy lovers heart in heart—
And out of hauntings of my spoken love,
And lonely listenings to my muttered dream,
And often feeling of the helpless hands,
And wordless broodings on the wasted cheek—
From all a closer interest flourished up
Tenderness touch by touch, and last, to these,
Love, like an Alpine harebell hung with tears
By some cold morning glacier; frail at first

And feeble, all unconscious of itself,
But such as gathered color day by day.

Last I woke sane, but wellnigh close to death
For weakness: it was evening: silent light
Slept on the painted walls, wherein were wrought
Two grand designs; for on one side arose
The women up in wild revolt, and stormed
At the Oppian law. Titanic shapes, they crammed
The forum, and half-crushed among the rest
A dwarf-like Cato cowered. On the other side
Hortensia spoke against the tax; behind,
A train of dames: by axe and eagle sat,
With all their foreheads drawn in Roman scowls,
And half the wolf's-milk curdled in their veins,
The fierce triumvirs; and before them paused
Hortensia, pleading: angry was her face.

I saw the forms: I knew not where I was:
They did but look like hollow shows; nor more
Sweet Ida: palm to palm she sat: the dew
Dwelt in her eyes, and softer all her shape
And rounder seemed: I moved: I sighed: a touch
Came round my wrist, and tears upon my hand:
Then all for languor and self-pity ran
Mine down my face, and with what life I had,
And like a flower that cannot all unfold,
So drenched it is with tempest, to the sun,
Yet, as it may, turns toward him, I on her
Fixt my faint eyes, and uttered whisperingly:

"If you be, what I think you, some sweet dream,
I would but ask you to fulfil yourself:
But if you be that Ida whom I knew,
I ask you nothing: only, if a dream,
Sweet dream, be perfect. I shall die to-night.
Stoop down and seem to kiss me ere I die."

I could no more, but lay like one in trance,

That hears his burial talked of by his friends,
And cannot speak, nor move, nor make one sign,
But lies and dreads his doom. She turned: she paused;
She stooped; and out of languor leapt a cry,
Leapt fiery Passion from the brinks of death;
And I believed that in the living world
My spirit closed with Ida's at the lips;
Till back I fell, and from mine arms she rose
Glowing all over noble shame; and all
Her falser self slipt from her like a robe,
And left her woman, lovelier in her mood
Than in her mould that other, when she came
From barren deeps to conquer all with love;
And down the streaming crystal dropt, and she
Far-fleeted by the purple island-sides,
Naked, a double light in air and wave,
To meet her Graces, where they decked her out
For worship without end; nor end of mine,
Stateliest, for thee! but mute she glided forth,
Nor glanced behind her, and I sank and slept,
Filled through and through with Love, a happy sleep.

Deep in the night I woke: she, near me, held
A volume of the Poets of her land:
There to herself, all in low tones, she read.

"Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the white,
Nor waves the cypress in the palace walk;
Nor winks the gold fin in the porphyry font:
The fire-fly wakens: waken thou with me.

"Now droops the milk-white peacock like a ghost,
And like a ghost she glimmers on to me.

"Now lies the Earth all Danaë to the stars,
And all thy heart lies open unto me.

"Now slides the silent meteor on, and leaves
A shining furrow, as thy thoughts in me.

"Now folds the lily all her sweetness up,
And slips into the bosom of the lake:
So fold thyself, my dearest, thou, and slip
Into my bosom and be lost in me."

I heard her turn the page; she found a small
Sweet Idyl, and once more, as low, she read:

"Come down, oh maid, from yonder mountain height:
What pleasure lives in height, (the shepherd sang,)
In height and cold, the splendor of the hills?
But cease to move so near the Heavens, and cease
To glide a sunbeam by the blasted pine,
To sit a star upon the sparkling spire;
And come, for Love is of the valley, come,
For Love is of the valley, come thou down
And find him; by the happy threshold, he,
Or hand in hand with Plenty in the maize,
Or red with spirted purple of the vats,
Or foxlike in the vine; nor cares to walk
With Death and Morning on the Silver Horns,
Nor wilt thou snare him in the white ravine,
Nor find him dropt upon the firths of ice,
That huddling slant in furrow-cloven falls
To roll the torrent out of dusky doors:
But follow; let the torrent dance thee down
To find him in the valley; let the wild
Lean-headed Eagles yelp alone, and leave
The monstrous ledges there to slope, and spill
Their thousand wreaths of dangling water-smoke,
That like a broken purpose waste in air:
So waste not thou; but come; for all the vales
Await thee; azure pillars of the hearth
Arise to thee; the children call, and I
Thy shepherd pipe, and sweet is every sound,

Sweeter thy voice, but every sound is sweet;
Myriads of rivulets hurrying through the lawn,
The moan of doves in immemorial elms,
And murmuring of innumerable bees."

So she low-toned; while with shut eyes I lay
Listening; then looked. Pale was the perfect face;
The bosom with long sighs labored; and meek
Seemed the full lips, and mild the luminous eyes,
And the voice trembled and the hand. She said
Brokenly, that she knew it, she had failed
In sweet humility; had failed in all;
That all her labor was but as a block
Left in the quarry; but she still were loth,
She still were loth to yield herself to one,
That wholly scorned to help their equal rights
Against the sons of men, and barbarous laws.
She prayed me not to judge their cause from her
That wronged it, sought far less for truth than
power
In knowledge: something wild within her breast,
A greater than all knowledge, beat her down.
And she had nursed me there from week to week:
Much had she learnt in little time. In part
It was ill counsel had misled the girl
To vex true hearts: yet was she but a girl—
"Ah fool, and made myself a Queen of farce!
When comes another such? never, I think,
Till the Sun drop dead from the signs."

Her voice
Choked, and her forehead sank upon her hands,
And her great heart through all the faultful Past
Went sorrowing in a pause I dared not break;
Till notice of a change in the dark world
Was lispt about the acacias, and a bird
That early woke to feed her little ones
Sent from a dewy breast a cry for light:
She moved, and at her feet the volume fell.

"Blame not thyself too much," I said, "nor blame
Too much the sons of men and barbarous laws;
These were the rough ways of the world till now.
Henceforth thou hast a helper, me, that know
The woman's cause is man's: they rise or sink
Together, dwarfed or godlike, bond or free:
For she that out of Lethe scales with man
The shining steps of Nature, shares with man
His nights, his days, moves with him to one goal,
Stays all the fair young planet in her hands—
If she be small, slight-natured, miserable,
How shall men grow? but work no more alone!
Our place is much: as far as in us lies
We two will serve them both in aiding her—
Will clear away the parasitic forms
That seem to keep her up, but drag her down—
Will leave her space to burgeon out of all
Within her—let her make herself her own
To give or keep, to live and learn and be
All that not harms distinctive womanhood.
For woman is not undeveloped man,
But diverse: could we make her as the man,
Sweet love were slain: his dearest bond is this
Not like to like, but like in difference:
Yet in the long years liker must they grow;
The man be more of woman, she of man;
He gain in sweetness and in moral height,
Nor lose the wrestling thews that throw the world;
She mental breadth, nor fail in childward care,
Nor lose the childlike in the larger mind;
Till at the last she set herself to man,
Like perfect music unto noble words;
And so these twain, upon the skirts of Time,
Sit side by side, full-summed in all their powers,
Dispensing harvest, sowing the To-be,
Self-reverent each and reverencing each,
Distinct in individualities,
But like each other even as those who love.
Then comes the statelier Eden back to men:

Then reign the world's great bridals, chaste and calm
Then springs the crowning race of humankind.
May these things be!"
Sighing she spoke, "I fear
They will not."
"Dear, but let us type them now
In our own lives, and this proud watchword rest
Of equal; seeing either sex alone
Is half itself, and in true marriage lies
Nor equal, nor unequal: each fulfils
Defect in each, and always thought in thought,
Purpose in purpose, will in will, they grow,
The single pure and perfect animal,
The two-celled heart, beating with one full stroke,
Life."
And again sighing she spoke: "A dream
That once was mine! what woman taught you this?"

"Alone," I said, "from earlier than I know,
Immersed in rich foreshadowings of the world,
I loved the woman: he, that doth not, lives
A drowning life, besotted in sweet self,
Or pines in sad experience worse than death,
Or keeps his winged affections clipt with crime:
Yet was there one through whom I loved her, one
Not learned, save in gracious household ways,
Not perfect, nay, but full of tender wants,
No Angel, but a dearer being, all dipt
In Angel instincts, breathing Paradise,
Interpreter between the Gods and men,
Who looked all native to her place, and yet
On tiptoe seemed to touch upon a sphere
Too gross to tread, and all male minds perforce
Swayed to her from their orbits as they moved
And girdled her with music. Happy he
With such a mother! faith in womankind
Beats with his blood, and trust in all things high
Comes easy to him, and though he trip and fall,
He shall not blind his soul with clay."

"But I,"
Said Ida, tremulously, "so all unlike—
It seems you love to cheat yourself with words:
This mother is your model. I have heard
Of your strange doubts: they well might be: I seem
A mockery to my own self. Never, Prince;
You cannot love me."

"Nay, but thee," I said,
"From year-long poring on thy pictured eyes,
Ere seen I loved, and loved thee seen, and saw
Thee woman through the crust of iron moods
That masked thee from men's reverence up, and forced
Sweet love on pranks of saucy boyhood: now
Given back to life; to life indeed, through thee,
Indeed I love: the new day comes, the light
Dearer for night, as dearer thou for faults
Lived over: lift thine eyes; my doubts are dead,
My haunting sense of hollow shows: the change,
This truthful change in thee has killed it. Dear,
Look up and let thy nature strike on mine
Like yonder morning on the blind half-world;
Approach and fear not; breathe upon my brows;
In that fine air I tremble, all the past
Melts mist-like into this bright hour, and this
Is morn to more, and all the rich to come
Reels, as the golden Autumn woodland reels
Athwart the smoke of burning weeds. Forgive me,
I waste my heart in signs: let be. My bride,
My wife, my life. O we will walk this world,
Yoked in all exercise of noble end,
And so through those dark gates across the wild
That no man knows. Indeed I love thee; come,
Yield thyself up: my hopes and thine are one:
Accomplish thou my manhood and thyself,
Lay thy sweet hands in mine and trust to me."

CONCLUSION.

So closed our tale, of which I give you all
The random scheme as wildly as it rose:
The words are mostly mine: for when we ceased
There came a minute's pause, and Walter said,
"I wish she had not yielded!" then to me,
"What, if you drest it up poetically?"
So prayed the men, the women: I gave assent:
Yet how to bind the scattered scheme of seven
Together in one sheaf? What style could suit?
The men required that I should give throughout
The sort of mock-heroic gigantesque,
With which we bantered little Lilia first:
The women—and perhaps they felt their power,
For something in the ballads which they sang,
Or in their silent influence as they sat,
Had ever seemed to wrestle with burlesque,
And drove us, last, to quite a solemn close—
They hated banter, wished for something real,
A gallant fight, a noble princess—why
Not make her true-heroic—true-sublime?
Or all, they said, as earnest as the close?
Which yet with such a framework scarce could be.
Then rose a little feud betwixt the two,
Betwixt the mockers and the realists:
And I, betwixt them both, to please them both,
And yet to give the story as it rose,
I moved as in a strange diagonal,
And maybe neither pleased myself nor them.

But Lilia pleased me, for she took no part
In our dispute: the sequel of the tale
Had touched her; and she sat, she plucked the grass,
She flung it from her, thinking: last, she fixt
A showery glance upon her aunt, and said,
"You—tell us what we are;" who might have told,

For she was crammed with theories out of books,
But that there rose a shout: the gates were closed
At sunset, and the crowd were swarming now,
To take their leave, about the garden rails.

So I and some went out to these: we climbed
The slope to Vivian-place, and turning saw
The happy valleys half in light and half
Far-shadowing from the west, a land of peace:
Gray halls alone among their massive groves;
Trim hamlets; here and there a rustic tower
Half-lost in belts of hop and breadths of wheat;
The shimmering glimpses of a stream; the seas;
A red sail, or a white; and far beyond,
Imagined more than seen, the skirts of France.

"Look there, a garden!" said my college friend,
The Tory member's elder son, "and there!
God bless the narrow sea which keeps her off,
And keeps our Britain, whole within herself,
A nation yet, the rulers and the ruled—
Some sense of duty, something of a faith,
Some reverence for the laws ourselves have made,
Some patient force to change them when we will,
Some civic manhood firm against the crowd—
But yonder, whiff! there comes a sudden heat,
The gravest citizen seems to lose his head,
The king is scared, the soldier will not fight,
The little boys begin to shoot and stab,
A kingdom topples over with a shriek
Like an old woman, and down rolls the world
In mock heroics stranger than our own;
Revolts, republics, revolutions, most
No graver than a school-boys' barring out;
Too comic for the solemn things they are,
Too solemn for the comic touches in them,
Like our wild Princess with as wise a dream
As some of theirs—God bless the narrow seas!
I wish they were a whole Atlantic broad."

"Have patience," I replied, "ourselves are full
Of social wrong; and maybe wildest dreams
Are but the needful preludes of the truth:
For me, the genial day, the happy crowd,
The sport half-science, fill me with a faith.
This fine old world of ours is but a child
Yet in the go-cart. Patience! Give it time
To learn its limbs: there is a hand that guides."

In such discourse we gained the garden rails,
And there we saw Sir Walter where he stood,
Before a tower of crimson holly-oaks,
Among six boys, head under head, and looked
No little lily-handed Baronet he,
A great broad-shouldered genial Englishman,
A lord of fat prize-oxen and of sheep,
A raiser of huge melons and of pine,
A patron of some thirty charities,
A pamphleteer on guano and on grain,
A quarter-sessions chairman, abler none;
Fair-haired and redder than a windy morn;
Now shaking hands with him, now him, of those
That stood the nearest—now addressed to speech—
Who spoke few words and pithy, such as closed
Welcome, farewell, and welcome for the year
To follow: a shout rose again, and made
The long line of the approaching rookery swerve
From the elms, and shook the branches of the deer
From slope to slope through distant ferns, and rang
Beyond the bourn of sunset; O, a shout
More joyful than the city-roar that hails
Premier or king! Why should not these great Sirs
Give up their parks some dozen times a year
To let the people breathe? So thrice they cried,
I likewise, and in groups they streamed away.

But we went back to the Abbey, and sat on,
So much the gathering darkness charmed: we sat
But spoke not, rapt in nameless reverie,

Perchance upon the future man: the walls
Blackened about us, bats wheeled, and owls
whooped,
And gradually the powers of the night,
That range above the region of the wind,
Deepening the courts of twilight broke them up
Through all the silent spaces of the worlds,
Beyond all thought into the Heaven of Heavens.

Last little Lilia, rising quietly,
Disrobed the glimmering statue of Sir Ralph
From those rich silks, and home well pleased we
went.

IN MEMORIAM.

STRONG Son of God, immortal Love,
Whom we, that have not seen thy face,
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove!

Thine are these orbs of light and shade;
Thou madest Life in man and brute;
Thou madest Death; and lo! thy foot
Is on the skull which thou hast made.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:
Thou madest man, he knows not why;
He thinks he was not made to die;
And thou hast made him: thou art just.

Thou seemest human and divine,
The highest, holiest manhood, thou:
Our wills are ours, we know not how;
Our wills are ours, to make them thine.

Our little systems have their day;
They have their day and cease to be;
They are but broken lights of thee,
And thou, oh Lord, art more than they.

We have but faith: we cannot know;
For knowledge is of things we see;
And yet we trust it comes from thee,
A beam in darkness: let it grow.

Let knowledge grow from more to more,
But more of reverence in us dwell;
That mind and soul, according well,
May make one music, as before,

But vaster. We are fools and slight;
We mock thee when we do not fear:
But help thy foolish ones to bear;
Help thy vain worlds to bear thy light.

Forgive what seemed my sin in me;
What seemed my worth since I began;
For merit lives from man to man,
And not from man, oh Lord, to thee.

Forgive my grief for one removed,
Thy creature, whom I found so fair.
I trust he lives in thee, and there
I find him worthier to be loved.

Forgive these wild and wandering cries,
Confusions of a wasted youth;
Forgive them where they fail in truth,
And in thy wisdom make me wise.

1849.

IN MEMORIAM

A. H. H.

OBIIT MDCCCXXXIII.

I.

I HELD it truth, with him who sings
To one clear harp in divers tones,
That men may rise on stepping-stones
Of their dead selves to higher things.

But who shall so forecast the years,
And find in loss a gain to match?
Or reach a hand through time to catch
The far-off interest of tears?

Let Love clasp Grief, lest both be drowned,
Let darkness keep her raven gloss;
Ah! sweeter to be drunk with loss,
To dance with death, to beat the ground,

Than that the victor Hours should scorn
The long result of love, and boast:
"Behold the man that loved and lost,
But all he was is overworn."

II.

OLD Yew, which graspest at the stones
That name the underlying dead,
Thy fibres net the dreamless head;
Thy roots are wrapped about the bones.

The seasons bring the flower again,
And bring the firstling to the flock;
And in the dusk of thee, the clock
Beats out the little lives of men.

O, not for thee the glow, the bloom,
Who changest not in any gale!
Nor branding summer suns avail
To touch thy thousand years of gloom.

And gazing on thee, sullen tree,
Sick for thy stubborn hardihood,
I seem to fail from out my blood,
And grow incorporate into thee.

III.

O SORROW, cruel fellowship!
O Priestess in the vaults of Death!
O sweet and bitter in a breath,
What whispers from thy lying lip?

"The stars," she whispers, "blindly run;
A web is woven across the sky;
From out waste places comes a cry,
And murmurs from the dying sun:

"And all the phantom, Nature, stands,—
With all the music in her tone,
A hollow echo of my own,—
A hollow form with empty hands."

And shall I take a thing so blind,
Embrace her as my natural good;
Or crush her, like a vice of blood,
Upon the threshold of the mind?

IV.

To Sleep I give my powers away,
My will is bondsman to the dark;
I sit within a helmless bark,
And with my heart I muse, and say:

O heart, how fares it with thee now,
That thou shouldst fail from thy desire,
Who scarcely darest to inquire
"What is it makes me beat so low?"

Something it is which thou hast lost,
Some pleasure from thine early years.
Break, thou deep vase of chilling tears,
That grief hath shaken into frost!

Such clouds of nameless trouble cross
All night below the darkened eyes;
With morning wakes the will, and cries,
"Thou shalt not be the fool of loss!"

V.

I SOMETIMES hold it half a sin
To put in words the grief I feel,
For words, like nature, half reveal
And half conceal the Soul within.

But, for the unquiet heart and brain,
A use in measured language lies;
The sad mechanic exercise,
Like dull narcotics, numbing pain.

In words, like weeds, I'll wrap me o'er,
Like coarsest clothes against the cold;
But that large grief which these infold
Is given in outline and no more.

VI.

One writes, that "Other friends remain,"
That "Loss is common to the race,"—
And common is the commonplace,
And vacant chaff well meant for grain.

That loss is common would not make
My own less bitter, rather more:
Too common! Never morning wore
To evening, but some heart did break.

O father, wheresoe'er thou be,
Who pledgest now thy gallant son;
A shot, ere half thy draught be done,
Hath stilled the life that beat from thee.

O mother, praying God will save
Thy sailor, while thy head is bowed,
His heavy-shotted hammock-shroud
Drops in his vast and wandering grave.

Ye know no more than I who wrought
At that last hour to please him well;
Who mused on all I had to tell,
And something written, something thought;

Expecting still his advent home;
And ever met him on his way
With wishes, thinking, here to-day,
Or here to-morrow will he come.

O, somewhere, meek unconscious dove,
That sittest 'ranging golden hair;
And glad to find thyself so fair,
Poor child, that waitest for thy love!

For now her father's chimney glows
In expectation of a guest;
And thinking "this will please him best,"
She takes a ribbon or a rose;

For he will see them on to-night;
And with the thought her color burns;
And, having left the glass, she turns
Once more to set a ringlet right;

And, even when she turned, the curse
Had fallen, and her future Lord
Was drowned in passing through the ford,
Or killed in falling from his horse.

O, what to her shall be the end?
And what to me remains of good?
To her, perpetual maidenhood,
And unto me, no second friend.

VII.

Dark house, by which once more I stand,
Here in the long unlovely street,
Doors, where my heart was used to beat
So quickly, waiting for a hand,

A hand that can be clasped no more,—
Behold me, for I cannot sleep,
And like a guilty thing I creep
At earliest morning to the door.

He is not here; but far away
The noise of life begins again,
And ghastly through the drizzling rain
On the bald street breaks the blank day.

VIII.

A happy lover who has come
To look on her that loves him well,
Who lights, and rings the gateway bell,
And learns her gone, and far from home,

He saddens, all the magic light
Dies off at once from bower and hall,
And all the place is dark, and all
The chambers emptied of delight.

So find I every pleasant spot
In which we two were wont to meet,
The field, the chamber, and the street,
For all is dark, where thou art not.

Yet as that other, wandering there
In those deserted walks, may find
A flower beat with rain and wind,
Which once she fostered up with care;

So seems it in my deep regret,
O my forsaken heart, with thee,
And this poor flower of poesy,
Which, little cared for, fades not yet.

But since it pleased a vanished eye,
I go to plant it on his tomb,
That if it can it there may bloom,
Or dying there at least may die.

IX.

Fair ship, that from the Italian shore
Sailest the placid ocean plains,
With my lost Arthur's loved remains,
Spread thy full wings, and waft him o'er!

So draw him home to those that mourn,
In vain; a favorable speed
Ruffle thy mirrored mast, and lead
Through prosperous floods his holy urn!

All night no ruder air perplex
Thy sliding keel, till Phosphor, bright

As our pure love, through early light
Shall glimmer on the dewy decks!

Sphere all your lights around, above;
Sleep, gentle heavens, before the prow;
Sleep, gentle winds, as he sleeps now,
My friend, the brother of my love!

My Arthur! whom I shall not see
Till all my widowed race be run;
Dear as the mother to the son,
More than my brothers are to me!

X.

I HEAR the noise about thy keel;
I hear the bell struck in the night;
I see the cabin-window bright;
I see the sailor at the wheel.

Thou bringest the sailor to his wife;
And travelled men from foreign lands;
And letters unto trembling hands;
And, thy dark freight, a vanished life.

So bring him: we have idle dreams:
This look of quiet flatters thus
Our home-bred fancies: oh, to us,
The fools of habit, sweeter seems

To rest beneath the clover sod,
That takes the sunshine and the rains,
Or where the kneeling hamlet drains
The chalice of the grapes of God,

Than if with thee the roaring wells
Should gulf him fathom deep in brine;
And hands so often clasped in mine
Should toss with tangle and with shells.

XI.

CALM is the morn, without a sound,
Calm as to suit a calmer grief,
And only through the faded leaf
The chestnut pattering to the ground:

Calm and deep peace on this high wold,
And on these dews that drench the furze,
And all the silvery gossamers
That twinkle into green and gold:

Calm and still light on yon great plain,
That sweeps, with all its autumn bowers,
And crowded farms and lessening towers,
To mingle with the bounding main:

Calm and deep peace in this wide air,
These leaves that redden to the fall;
And in my heart, if calm at all,
If any calm, a calm despair:

Calm on the seas, and silver sleep,
And waves that sway themselves in rest,
And dead calm in that noble breast
Which heaves but with the heaving deep.

XII.

Lo! as a dove when up she springs,
To bear through Heaven a tale of woe,
Some dolorous message knit below
The wild pulsation of her wings;

Like her I go: I cannot stay;
I leave this mortal ark behind,
A weight of nerves without a mind,
And leave the cliffs, and haste away

O'er ocean mirrors rounded large,
And reach the glow of southern skies,
And see the sails at distance rise,
And linger weeping on the marge,

And saying, "Comes he thus, my friend?
Is this the end of all my care?"
And circle moaning in the air:
"Is this the end? Is this the end?"

And forward dart again, and play
About the prow, and back return
To where the body sits, and learn
That I have been an hour away.

XIII.

Tears of the widower, when he sees
A late-lost form that sleep reveals,
And moves his doubtful arms, and feels
Her place is empty, fall like these,

Which weep a loss forever new,
A void where heart on heart reposed;
And, where warm hands have pressed and closed,
Silence, till I be silent too.

Which weep the comrade of my choice,
An awful thought, a life removed,
The human-hearted man I loved,
A spirit, not a breathing voice.

Come, Time, and teach me many years
I do not suffer in a dream;
For now so strange do these things seem,
Mine eyes have leisure for their tears;

My fancies time to rise on wing,
And glance about the approaching sails,
As though they brought but merchants' bales
And not the burthen that they bring.

XIV.

If one should bring me this report,
That thou hadst touched the land to-day,
And I went down unto the quay,
And found thee lying in the port;

And standing, muffled round with woe,
Should see thy passengers in rank
Come stepping lightly down the plank,
And beckoning unto those they know;

And if along with these should come
The man I held as half divine;
Should strike a sudden hand in mine,
And ask a thousand things of home;

And I should tell him all my pain,
And how my life had drooped of late,
And he should sorrow o'er my state,
And marvel what possessed my brain;

And I perceive no touch of change,
No hint of death in all his frame,
But found him all in all the same,
I should not feel it to be strange.

XV.

To-night the winds begin to rise
And roar from yonder dropping day;
The last red leaf is whirled away,
The rooks are blown about the skies;

The forest cracked, the waters curled,
    The cattle huddled on the lea;
    And wildly dashed on tower and tree
The sunbeam strikes along the world;

And but for fancies, which aver
    That all thy motions gently pass
    Athwart a plane of molten glass,
I scarce could brook the strain and stir

That makes the barren branches loud;
    And but for fear it is not so,
    The wild unrest that lives in woe
Would dote and pore on yonder cloud

That rises upward always higher,
    And onward drags a laboring breast,
    And topples round the dreary west,
A looming bastion fringed with fire.

XVI.

What words are these have fallen from me?
    Can calm despair and wild unrest
    Be tenants of a single breast,
Or sorrow such a changeling be?

Or doth she only seem to take
    The touch of change in calm or storm;
    But knows no more of transient form
In her deep self, than some dead lake

That holds the shadow of a lark
    Hung in the shadow of a heaven?
    Or has the shock, so harshly given,
Confused me like the unhappy bark

That strikes by night a craggy shelf,
    And staggers blindly ere she sink?
    And stunned me from my power to think,
And all my knowledge of myself;

And made me that delirious man
Whose fancy fuses old and new,
And flashes into false and true,
And mingles all without a plan?

XVII.

Thou comest, much wept for; such a breeze
Compelled thy canvas, and my prayer
Was as the whisper of an air
To breathe thee over lonely seas.

For I in spirit saw thee move
Through circles of the bounding sky;
Week after week: the days go by:
Come quick, thou bringest all I love.

Henceforth, wherever thou mayst roam,
My blessing, like a line of light,
Is on the waters day and night,
And like a beacon guards thee home.

So may whatever tempest mars
Mid-ocean spare thee, sacred bark;
And balmy drops in summer dark
Slide from the bosom of the stars.

So kind an office hath been done,
Such precious relics brought by thee;
The dust of him I shall not see
Till all my widowed race be run.

XVIII.

'Tis well, 'tis something, we may stand
Where he in English earth is laid,
And from his ashes may be made
The violet of his native land.

'Tis little; but it looks in truth
As if the quiet bones were blest
Among familiar names to rest,
And in the places of his youth.

Come, then, pure hands, and bear the head
That sleeps or wears the mask of sleep;
And come, whatever loves to weep,
And hear the ritual of the dead.

Ah! yet, even yet, if this might be,
I, falling on his faithful heart,
Would, breathing through his lips, impart
The life that almost dies in me:

That dies not, but endures with pain,
And slowly forms the firmer mind,
Treasuring the look it cannot find,
The words that are not heard again.

XIX.

The Danube to the Severn gave
The darkened heart that beat no more;
They laid him by the pleasant shore,
And in the hearing of the wave.

There twice a day the Severn fills,
The salt sea-water passes by,
And hushes half the babbling Wye,
And makes a silence in the hills.

The Wye is hushed nor moved along;
And hushed my deepest grief of all,
When, filled with tears that cannot fall,
I brim with sorrow drowning song.

The tide flows down, the wave again
Is vocal in its wooded walls:
My deeper anguish also falls,
And I can speak a little then.

XX.

THE lesser griefs, that may be said,
That breathe a thousand tender vows,
Are but as servants in a house
Where lies the master newly dead;

Who speak their feeling as it is,
And weep the fulness from the mind.
"It will be hard," they say, "to find
Another service such as this."

My lighter moods are like to these,
That out of words a comfort win;
But there are other griefs within,
And tears that at their fountain freeze;

For by the hearth the children sit
Cold in that atmosphere of Death,
And scarce endure to draw the breath,
Or like to noiseless phantoms flit;

But open converse is there none,
So much the vital spirits sink
To see the vacant chair, and think,
"How good! how kind! and he is gone."

XXI.

I SING to him that rests below,
And, since the grasses round me wave,
I take the grasses of the grave,
And make them pipes whereon to blow.

The traveller hears me now and then,
And sometimes harshly will he speak:
"This fellow would make weakness weak,
And melt the waxen hearts of men."

Another answers, " Let him be;
He loves to make parade of pain,
That with his piping he may gain
The praise that comes to constancy."

A third is wroth: " Is this an hour
For private sorrow's barren song,
When more and more the people throng
The chairs and thrones of civil power?

" A time to sicken and to swoon,
When science reaches forth her arms
To feel from world to world, and charms
Her secret from the latest moon? "

Behold, ye speak an idle thing:
Ye never knew the sacred dust;
I do but sing because I must,
And pipe but as the linnets sing.

And one is glad; her note is gay,
For now her little ones have ranged:
And one is sad; her note is changed,
Because her brood is stolen away.

XXII.

The path by which we twain did go,
Which led by tracts that pleased us well,
Through four sweet years arose and fell,
From flower to flower, from snow to snow.

And we with singing cheered the way,
And crowned with all the season lent,
From April on to April went,
And glad at heart from May to May.

But where the path we walked began
To slant the fifth autumnal slope,
As we descended, following Hope,
There sat the Shadow feared of man;

Who broke our fair companionship,
And spread his mantle dark and cold;
And wrapped thee formless in the fold,
And dulled the murmur on thy lip;

And bore thee where I could not see
Nor follow, though I walk in haste;
And think that, somewhere in the waste,
The Shadow sits and waits for me.

XXIII.

Now, sometimes in my sorrow shut,
Or breaking into song by fits;
Alone, alone, to where he sits,
The Shadow cloaked from head to foot,

Who keeps the keys of all the creeds,
I wander, often falling lame,
And looking back to whence I came,
Or on to where the pathway leads;

And crying, "how changed from where it ran
Through lands where not a leaf was dumb;
But all the lavish hills would hum
The murmur of a happy Pan:

When each by turns was guide to each,
And Fancy light from Fancy caught,
And Thought leapt out to wed with Thought,
Ere Thought could wed itself with Speech;

And all we met was fair and good,
And all was good that Time could bring,
And all the secret of the Spring
Moved in the chambers of the blood;

And many an old philosophy
On Argive heights divinely sang,
And round us all the thicket rang
To many a flute of Arcady."

XXIV.

And was the day of my delight
As pure and perfect as I say?
The very source and fount of Day
Is dashed with wandering isles of night.

If all was good and fair we met,
This earth had been the Paradise
It never looked to human eyes
Since Adam left his garden yet.

And is it that the haze of grief
Makes former gladness loom so great?
The lowness of the present state,
That sets the past in this relief?

Or that the past will always win
A glory from its being far;
And orb into the perfect star
We saw not, when we moved therein?

XXV.

I know that this was Life,—the track
Whereon with equal feet we fared;
And then, as now, the day prepared
The daily burden for the back.

But this it was that made me move
As light as carrier-birds in air:
I loved the weight I had to bear,
Because it needed help of Love;

Nor could I weary, heart or limb,
When mighty Love would cleave in twain
The lading of a single pain,
And part it, giving half to him.

XXVI.

Still onward winds the dreary way;
I with it; for I long to prove
No lapse of moons can canker Love,
Whatever fickle tongues may say.

And if that eye which watches guilt
And goodness, and hath power to see
Within the green the mouldered tree,
And towers fallen as soon as built,—

O, if indeed that eye foresee,
Or see, (in Him is no before,)
In more of life true life no more,
And Love the indifference to be,

Then might I find, ere yet the morn
Breaks hither over Indian seas,
That Shadow waiting with the keys,
To shroud me from my proper scorn.

XXVII.

I envy not, in any moods,
The captive void of noble rage,
The linnet born within the cage,
That never knew the summer woods:

I envy not the beast that takes
His license in the field of time,
Unfettered by the sense of crime,
To whom a conscience never wakes;

Nor, what may count itself as blest,
The heart that never plighted troth,
But stagnates in the weeds of sloth,
Nor any want-begotten rest.

I hold it true, whate'er befall;
I feel it, when I sorrow most;
'T is better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all.

XXVIII.

The time draws near the birth of Christ:
The moon is hid; the night is still;
The Christmas bells from hill to hill
Answer each other in the mist.

Four voices of four hamlets round,
From far and near, on mead and moor,
Swell out and fail, as if a door
Were shut between me and the sound:

Each voice four changes on the wind,
That now dilate, and now decrease,
Peace and good-will, good-will and peace,
Peace and good-will, to all mankind.

This year I slept and woke with pain,
I almost wished no more to wake,
And that my hold on life would break
Before I heard those bells again:

But they my troubled spirit rule,
For they controlled me when a boy;
They bring me sorrow touched with joy,
The merry, merry bells of Yule.

XXIX.

With such compelling cause to grieve
As daily vexes household peace,
And chains regret to his decease,
How dare we keep our Christmas eve;

Which brings no more a welcome guest
To enrich the threshold of the night
With showered largess of delight,
In dance and song and game and jest.

Yet go, and while the holly-boughs
Entwine the cold baptismal font,
Make one wreath more for Use and Wont
That guard the portals of the house;

Old sisters of a day gone by,
Gray nurses, loving nothing new;
Why should they miss their yearly due
Before their time? They too will die.

XXX.

With trembling fingers did we weave
The holly round the Christmas hearth;
A rainy cloud possessed the earth,
And sadly fell our Christmas eve.

At our old pastimes in the hall
We gambolled, making vain pretence
Of gladness, with an awful sense
Of one mute Shadow watching all.

We paused: the winds were in the beech:
We heard them sweep the winter land;
And in a circle hand in hand
Sat silent, looking each at each.

Then echo-like our voices rang;
We sung, though every eye was dim,
A merry song we sang with him
Last year: impetuously we sang:

We ceased: a gentler feeling crept
Upon us: surely rest is meet:
"They rest," we said, "their sleep is sweet,"
And silence followed, and we wept.

Our voices took a higher range;
Once more we sang: "They do not die,
Nor lose their mortal sympathy,
Nor change to us, although they change;

"Rapt from the fickle and the frail,
With gathered power, yet the same,
Pierces the keen seraphic flame
From orb to orb, from veil to veil.

"Rise, happy morn! rise, holy morn!
Draw forth the cheerful day from night:
O Father! touch the east, and light
The light that shone when Hope was born."

XXXI.

When Lazarus left his charnel-cave,
And home to Mary's house returned,
Was this demanded,—if he yearned
To hear her weeping by his grave?

"Where wert thou, brother, those four days?"
There lives no record of reply,
Which, telling what it is to die,
Had surely added praise to praise.

From every house the neighbors met,
The streets were filled with joyful sound;
A solemn gladness even crowned
The purple brows of Olivet.

Behold a man raised up by Christ!
The rest remaineth unrevealed;
He told it not; or something sealed
The lips of that Evangelist.

XXXII.

Her eyes are homes of silent prayer,
Nor other thought her mind admits
But, he was dead, and there he sits,
And he that brought him back is there.

Then one deep love doth supersede
All other, when her ardent gaze
Roves from the living brother's face,
And rests upon the Life indeed.

All subtle thought, all curious fears,
Borne down by gladness so complete,
She bows, she bathes the Saviour's feet
With costly spikenard and with tears.

Thrice blest whose lives are faithful prayers,
Whose loves in higher love endure;
What souls possess themselves so pure,
Or is there blessedness like theirs?

XXXIII.

O THOU that after toil and storm
Mayst seem to have reached a purer air,
Whose faith has centre everywhere,
Nor cares to fix itself to form,

Leave thou thy sister, when she prays,
Her early Heaven, her happy views;
Nor thou with shadowed hint confuse
A life that leads melodious days.

Her faith through form is pure as thine,
Her hands are quicker unto good.
O, sacred be the flesh and blood
To which she links a truth divine!

See, thou that countest reason ripe
In holding by the law within,
Thou fail not in a world of sin,
And ev'n for want of such a type.

XXXIV.

MY own dim life should teach me this,
That life shall live forevermore,
Else earth is darkness at the core,
And dust and ashes all that is;

This round of green, this orb of flame,
Fantastic beauty; such as lurks
In some wild Poet, when he works
Without a conscience or an aim.

What then were God to such as I?
'Twere hardly worth my while to choose
Of things all mortal, or to use
A little patience ere I die.

'Twere best at once to sink to peace,
Like birds the charming serpent draws,
To drop head-foremost in the jaws
Of vacant darkness, and to cease.

XXXV.

Yet if some voice that man could trust
Should murmur from the narrow house:
"The cheeks drop in; the body bows;
Man dies: nor is there hope in dust:"

Might I not say? "yet even here,
But for one hour, oh Love, I strive
To keep so sweet a thing alive:"
But I should turn mine ears and hear

The moanings of the homeless sea,
The sound of streams that, swift or slow,
Draw down Æonian hills, and sow
The dust of continents to be;

And Love would answer, with a sigh,
"The sound of that forgetful shore
Will change my sweetness more and more,
Half dead to know that I shall die."

O me! what profits it to put
An idle case? If Death were seen
At first as Death, Love had not been,
Or been in narrowest working shut,

Mere fellowship of sluggish moods,
Or in his coarsest Satyr-shape
Had bruised the herb and crushed the grape,
And basked and battened in the woods.

XXXVI.

Though truths in manhood darkly join,
Deep-seated in our mystic frame,
We yield all blessing to the name
Of Him that made them current coin;

For wisdom dealt with mortal powers,
Where Truth in closest words shall fail,
When Truth embodied in a tale
Shall enter in at lowly doors.

And so the Word had breath, and wrought
With human hands the creed of creeds
In loveliness of perfect deeds,
More strong than all poetic thought;

Which he may read that binds the sheaf,
Or builds the house, or digs the grave,
And those wild eyes that watch the wave
In roarings round the coral reef.

XXXVII.

Urania speaks with darkened brow:
"Thou pratest here where thou art least;
This faith has many a purer priest,
And many an abler voice, than thou;

"Go down beside thy native rill,
On thy Parnassus set thy feet,
And hear thy laurel whisper sweet
About the ledges of the hill."

And my Melpomene replies,
A touch of shame upon her cheek:
"I am not worthy ev'n to speak
Of thy prevailing mysteries;

"For I am but an earthly Muse,
And owning but a little art
To lull with song an aching heart,
And render human love his dues;

"But brooding on the dear one dead,
And all he said of things divine,
(And dear to me as sacred wine
To dying lips is all he said,)

"I murmured, as I came along,
Of comfort clasped in truth revealed;
And loitered in the master's field,
And darkened sanctities with song."

XXXVIII.

With weary steps I loiter on,
Though always under altered skies
The purple from the distance dies,
My prospect and horizon gone.

No joy the blowing season gives,
The herald melodies of spring,
But in the songs I love to sing
A doubtful gleam of solace lives.

If any care for what is here
Survive in spirits rendered free,
Then are these songs I sing of thee
Not all ungrateful to thine ear.

XXXIX.

Could we forget the widowed hour,
And look on Spirits breathed away,
As on a maiden in the day
When first she wears her orange-flower!

When crowned with blessing she doth rise
To take her latest leave of home,
And hopes and light regrets that come
Make April of her tender eyes;

And doubtful joys the father move,
And tears are on the mother's face,
As parting, with a long embrace,
She enters other realms of love;

Her office there to rear, to teach,
Becoming, as is meet and fit,
A link among the days, to knit
The generations each with each;

And, doubtless, unto thee is given
A life that bears immortal fruit
In such great offices as suit
The full-grown energies of heaven.

Ay me, the difference I discern!
How often shall her old fireside
Be cheered with tidings of the bride!
How often she herself return,

And tell them all they would have told,
And bring her babe, and make her boast,
Till even those that missed her most
Shall count new things as dear as old!

But thou and I have shaken hands,
Till growing winters lay me low;
My paths are in the fields I know,
And thine in undiscovered lands.

XL.

Thy spirit, ere our fatal loss,
Did ever rise from high to higher;
As mounts the heavenward altar-fire,
As flies the lighter through the gross.

But thou art turned to something strange,
And I have lost the links that bound
Thy changes; here upon the ground,
No more partaker of thy change.

Deep folly! yet that this could be —
That I could wing my will with might
To leap the grades of life and light,
And flash at once, my friend, to thee:

For though my nature rarely yields
To that vague fear implied in death;
Nor shudders at the gulfs beneath,
The howlings from forgotten fields;

Yet oft, when sundown skirts the moor,
An inner trouble I behold,
A spectral doubt which makes me cold,
That I shall be thy mate no more,

Though following with an upward mind
The wonders that have come to thee,
Through all the secular to be,
But evermore a life behind.

XLI.

I VEX my heart with fancies dim:
He still outstripped me in the race;
It was but unity of place
That made me dream I ranked with him.

And so may Place retain us still,
And he the much-beloved again,
A lord of large experience, train
To riper growth the mind and will:

And what delights can equal those
That stir the spirit's inner deeps,
When one that loves, but knows not, reaps
A truth from one that loves and knows?

XLII.

If Sleep and Death be truly one,
And every spirit's folded bloom
Through all its intervital gloom
In some long trance should slumber on;

Unconscious of the sliding hour,
Bare of the body, might it last,
And silent traces of the past
Be all the color of the flower:

So then were nothing lost to man;
So that still garden of the souls
In many a figured leaf enrolls
The total world since life began:

And love will last as pure and whole
As when he loved me here in Time,
And at the spiritual prime
Rewaken with the dawning soul.

XLIII.

How fares it with the happy dead?
For here the man is more and more;
But he forgets the days before
God shut the doorways of his head.

The days have vanished, tone and tint,
And yet perhaps the hoarding sense
Gives out, at times, (he knows not whence,)
A little flash, a mystic hint;

And in the long, harmonious years
(If Death so taste Lethean springs)
May some dim touch of earthly things
Surprise thee ranging with thy peers.

If such a dreamy touch should fall,
O turn thee round, resolve the doubt,
My guardian angel will speak out
In that high place, and tell thee all.

XLIV.

The baby new to earth and sky,
What time his tender palm is pressed
Against the circle of the breast,
Has never thought that "this is I:"

But as he grows he gathers much,
And learns the use of "I," and "me,"
And finds "I am not what I see,
And other than the things I touch:"

So rounds he to a separate mind
From whence clear memory may begin,
As through the frame that binds him in
His isolation grows defined.

This use may lie in blood and breath,
Which else were fruitless of their due,
Had man to learn himself anew
Beyond the second birth of Death.

XLV.

We ranging down this lower track,
The path we came by, thorn and flower,
Is shadowed by the growing hour,
Lest life should fail in looking back.

So be it: there no shade can last
In that deep dawn behind the tomb,
But clear from marge to marge shall bloom
The eternal landscape of the past;

A lifelong tract of time revealed;
The fruitful hours of still increase;
Days ordered in a wealthy peace,
And those five years its richest field.

O Love! thy province were not large,
A bounded field, nor stretching far,
Look also, Love, a brooding star,
A rosy warmth from marge to marge.

XLVI.

That each, who seems a separate whole,
Should move his rounds, and fusing all
The skirts of self again, should fall
Remerging in the general Soul,

Is faith as vague as all unsweet:
Eternal form shall still divide
The eternal soul from all beside;
And I shall know him when we meet:

And we shall sit at endless feast,
Enjoying each the other's good;
What vaster dream can hit the mood
Of Love on earth? He seeks at least

Upon the last and sharpest height,
Before the spirits fade away,
Some landing-place, to clasp and say,
"Farewell! We lose ourselves in light."

XLVII.

If these brief lays, of Sorrow born,
Were taken to be such as closed
Grave doubts and answers here proposed,
Then these were such as men might scorn:

Her care is not to part and prove ;
She takes, when harsher moods remit,
What slender shade of doubt may flit,
And makes it vassal unto love :

And hence, indeed, she sports with words ;
But better serves a wholesome law,
And holds it sin and shame to draw
The deepest measure from the chords :

Nor dare she trust a larger lay,
But rather loosens from the lip
Short swallow-flights of song, that dip
Their wings in tears, and skim away.

XLVIII.

From art, from nature, from the schools,
Let random influences glance,
Like light in many a shivered lance
That breaks about the dappled pools :

The lightest wave of thought shall lisp,
The fancy's tenderest eddy wreathe,
The slightest air of song shall breathe,
To make the sullen surface crisp.

And look thy look, and go thy way,
But blame not thou the winds that make
The seeming-wanton ripple break,
The tender-pencilled shadow play.

Beneath all fancied hopes and fears,
Ay me ! the sorrow deepens down,
Whose muffled motions blindly drown
The bases of my life in tears.

XLIX.

Be near me when my light is low,
When the blood creeps, and the nerves prick

And tingle; and the heart is sick,
And all the wheels of Being slow.

Be near me when the sensuous frame
Is racked with pangs that conquer trust;
And Time, a maniac scattering dust,
And Life, a Fury slinging flame.

Be near me when my faith is dry,
And men the flies of latter spring,
That lay their eggs, and sting and sing,
And weave their petty cells and die.

Be near me when I fade away,
To point the term of human strife,
And on the low dark verge of life
The twilight of eternal day.

L.

Do we indeed desire the dead
Should still be near us at our side?
Is there no baseness we would hide?
No inner vileness that we dread?

Shall he for whose applause I strove,
I had such reverence for his blame,
See with clear eye some hidden shame,
And I be lessened in his love?

I wrong the grave with fears untrue:
Shall love be blamed for want of faith?
There must be wisdom with great Death:
The dead shall look me through and through.

Be near us when we climb or fall:
Ye watch, like God, the rolling hours
With larger other eyes than ours,
To make allowance for us all.

LI.

I CANNOT love thee as I ought,
For love reflects the thing beloved;
My words are only words, and moved
Upon the topmost froth of thought.

"Yet blame not thou thy plaintive song,"
The Spirit of true love replied;
"Thou canst not move me from thy side,
Nor human frailty do me wrong.

"What keeps a spirit wholly true
To that ideal which he bears?
What record? not the sinless years
That breathed beneath the Syrian blue:

"So fret not, like an idle girl,
That life is dashed with flecks of sin.
Abide: thy wealth is gathered in,
When Time hath sundered shell from pearl."

LII.

How many a father have I seen,
A sober man, among his boys,
Whose youth was full of foolish noise,
Who wears his manhood hale and green:

And dare we to this fancy give,
That had the wild oat not been sown,
The soil, left barren, scarce had grown
The grain by which a man may live?

O, if we held the doctrine sound
For life outliving heats of youth,
Yet who would preach it as a truth
To those that eddy round and round?

Hold thou the good: define it well:
For fear divine Philosophy
Should push beyond her mark, and be
Procuress to the Lords of Hell.

LIII.

O, YET we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill,
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt and taints of blood;

That nothing walks with aimless feet;
That not one life shall be destroyed,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete;

That not a worm is cloven in vain;
That not a moth with vain desire
Is shrivelled in a fruitless fire,
Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold, we know not any thing;
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last—far off—at last, to all,
And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream: but what am I?
An infant crying in the night:
An infant crying for the light:
And with no language but a cry.

LIV.

THE wish, that of the living whole
No life may fail beyond the grave,
Derives it not from what we have
The likest God within the soul?

Are God and Nature then at strife,
That Nature lends such evil dreams?
So careful of the type she seems,
So careless of the single life;

That I, considering everywhere
Her secret meaning in her deeds,
And finding that of fifty seeds
She often brings but one to bear,

I falter where I firmly trod,
And falling with my weight of cares
Upon the great world's altar-stairs
That slope through darkness up to God,

I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,
And gather dust and chaff, and call
To what I feel is Lord of all,
And faintly trust the larger hope.

LV.

"So careful of the type?" but no.
From scarped cliff and quarried stone
She cries, "A thousand types are gone:
I care for nothing, all shall go.

"Thou makest thine appeal to me:
I bring to life, I bring to death:
The spirit does but mean the breath:
I know no more." And he, shall he,

Man, her last work, who seemed so fair,
Such splendid purpose in his eyes,
Who rolled the psalm to wintry skies,
Who built him fanes of fruitless prayer,

Who trusted God was love indeed,
And love Creation's final law—
Though Nature, red in tooth and claw
With ravine, shrieked against his creed—

Who loved, who suffered countless ills,
Who battled for the True, the Just,
Be blown about the desert dust,
Or sealed within the iron hills?

No more? A monster then, a dream,
A discord. Dragons of the prime,
That tare each other in their slime,
Were mellow music matched with him.

O life as futile, then, as frail!
O for thy voice to soothe and bless!
What hope of answer, or redress?
Behind the veil, behind the veil.

LVI.

PEACE; come away: the song of woe
Is after all an earthly song:
Peace; come away: we do him wrong
To sing so wildly: let us go.

Come; let us go: your cheeks are pale;
But half my life I leave behind:
Methinks my friend is richly shrined;
But I shall pass; my work will fail.

Yet in these ears, till hearing dies,
One set slow bell will seem to toll
The passing of the sweetest soul
That ever looked with human eyes.

I hear it now, and o'er and o'er,
Eternal greetings to the dead;
And "Ave, Ave, Ave," said,
"Adieu, adieu," forevermore!

LVII.

IN those sad words I took farewell:
Like echoes in sepulchral halls,
As drop by drop the water falls
In vaults and catacombs, they fell;

And, falling, idly broke the peace
Of hearts that beat from day to day,
Half conscious of their dying clay,
And those cold crypts where they shall cease.

The high Muse answered: "Wherefore grieve
Thy brethren with a fruitless tear?

Abide a little longer here,
And thou shalt take a nobler leave."

LVIII.

O Sorrow, wilt thou live with me
No casual mistress, but a wife,
My bosom-friend and half of life;
As I confess it needs must be;

O Sorrow, wilt thou rule my blood,
Be sometimes lovely like a bride,
And put thy harsher moods aside,
If thou wilt have me wise and good.

My centred passion cannot move,
Nor will it lessen from to-day;
But I'll have leave at times to play
As with the creature of my love;

And set thee forth, for thou art mine,
With so much hope for years to come,
That, howsoe'er I know thee, some
Could hardly tell what name were thine.

LIX.

He passed; a soul of nobler tone:
My spirit loved and loves him yet,
Like some poor girl whose heart is set
On one whose rank exceeds her own.

He mixing with his proper sphere,
She finds the baseness of her lot,
Half jealous of she knows not what,
And envying all that meet him there.

The little village looks forlorn;
She sighs amid her narrow days,
Moving about the household ways,
In that dark house where she was born.

The foolish neighbors come and go,
And tease her till the day draws by;
At night she weeps, "How vain am I!
How should he love a thing so low?"

LX.

If, in thy second state sublime,
Thy ransomed reason change replies
With all the circle of the wise,
The perfect flower of human time;

And if thou cast thine eyes below,
How dimly charactered and slight,
How dwarfed a growth of cold and night,
How blanched with darkness, must I grow!

Yet turn thee to the doubtful shore,
Where thy first form was made a man,
I loved thee, Spirit, and love, nor can
The soul of Shakspeare love thee more.

LXI.

Though if an eye that's downward cast
Could make thee somewhat blench or fail,
Then be my love an idle tale,
And fading legend of the past;

And thou, as one that once declined,
When he was little more than boy,
On some unworthy heart with joy,
But lives to wed an equal mind;

And breathes a novel world, the while
His other passion wholly dies,
Or in the light of deeper eyes
Is matter for a flying smile.

LXII.

YET pity for a horse o'erdriven,
And love in which my hound has part,
Can hang no weight upon my heart,
In its assumptions up to heaven;

And I am so much more than these,
As thou, perchance, art more than I,
And yet I spare them sympathy,
And I would set their pains at ease.

So mayst thou watch me where I weep,
As, unto vaster motions bound,
The circuits of thine orbit round
A higher height, a deeper deep.

LXIII.

DOST thou look back on what hath been,
As some divinely gifted man,
Whose life in low estate began,
And on a simple village green;

Who breaks his birth's invidious bar,
And grasps the skirts of happy chance,
And breasts the blows of circumstance,
And grapples with his evil star;

Who makes by force his merit known,
And lives to clutch the golden keys,
To mould a mighty state's decrees,
And shape the whisper of the throne;

And moving up from high to higher,
Becomes on Fortune's crowning slope
The pillar of a people's hope,
The centre of a world's desire;

Yet feels, as in a pensive dream,
When all his active powers are still,
A distant dearness in the hill,
A secret sweetness in the stream,

The limit of his narrower fate,
While yet beside its vocal springs
He played at counsellors and kings,
With one that was his earliest mate;

Who ploughs with pain his native lea,
And reaps the labor of his hands,
Or in the furrow musing stands:
"Does my old friend remember me?"

LXIV.

SWEET soul! do with me as thou wilt;
I lull a fancy trouble-tost
With "Love's too precious to be lost,
A little grain shall not be spilt."

And in that solace can I sing,
Till out of painful phases wrought
There flutters up a happy thought,
Self-balanced on a lightsome wing;

Since we deserved the name of friends,
And thine effect so lives in me,
A part of mine may live in thee,
And move thee on to noble ends.

LXV.

YOU thought my heart too far diseased;
You wonder when my fancies play
To find me gay among the gay,
Like one with any trifle pleased.

The shade by which my life was crossed,
Which makes a desert in the mind,
Has made me kindly with my kind,
And like to him whose sight is lost;

Whose feet are guided through the land,
Whose jest among his friends is free,
Who takes the children on his knee,
And winds their curls about his hand;

He plays with threads, he beats his chair
For pastime, dreaming of the sky;
His inner day can never die,
His night of loss is always there.

LXVI.

When on my bed the moonlight falls,
I know that in thy place of rest,
By that broad water of the west,
There comes a glory on the walls:

Thy marble bright in dark appears,
As slowly steals a silver flame
Along the letters of thy name,
And o'er the number of thy years.

The mystic glory swims away;
From off my bed the moonlight dies:
And closing eaves of wearied eyes
I sleep till dusk is dipt in gray:

And then I know the mist is drawn
A lucid veil from coast to coast,
And in the dark church like a ghost
Thy tablet glimmers to the dawn.

LXVII.

When in the down I sink my head,
Sleep, Death's twin-brother, times my breath;
Sleep, Death's twin-brother, knows not Death,
Nor can I dream of thee as dead:

I walk as ere I walked forlorn,
When all our path was fresh with dew,
And all the bugle breezes blew
Reveillée to the breaking morn.

But what is this? I turn about,
I find a trouble in thine eye,
Which makes me sad, I know not why,
Nor can my dream resolve the doubt:

But ere the lark hath left the lea
I wake, and I discern the truth;
It is the trouble of my youth
That foolish sleep transfers to thee.

LXVIII.

I dreamed there would be Spring no more,
That Nature's ancient power was lost:
The streets were black with smoke and frost,
They chattered trifles at the door.

I wandered from the noisy town,
I found a wood with thorny boughs;
I took the thorns to bind my brows,
I wore them like a civic crown.

I met with scoffs, I met with scorns,
From youth and babe and hoary hairs:
They called me in the public squares
The fool that wears a crown of thorns.

They called me fool, they called me child:
I found an angel of the night:
The voice was low, the look was bright,
He looked upon my crown and smiled:

He reached the glory of a hand,
That seemed to touch it into leaf:
The voice was not the voice of grief;
The words were hard to understand.

LXIX.

I CANNOT see the features right,
When on the gloom I strive to paint
The face I know; the hues are faint,
And mix with hollow masks of night;

Cloud-towers by ghostly masons wrought,
A gulf that ever shuts and gapes,
A hand that points, and palled shapes
In shadowy thoroughfares of thought;

And crowds that stream from yawning doors,
And shoals of puckered faces drive;
Dark bulks that tumble half alive,
And lazy lengths on boundless shores:

Till all at once, beyond the will,
I hear a wizard music roll,
And through a lattice on the soul
Looks thy fair face and makes it still.

LXX.

SLEEP, kinsman thou to death and trance
And madness, thou hast forged at last
A night-long Present of the Past
In which we went through summer France.

'adst thou such credit with the soul?
Then bring an opiate trebly strong,
Drug down the blindfold sense of wrong
'hat so my pleasure may be whole;

While now we talk, as once we talked
Of men and minds, the dust of change,
The days that grow to something strange,
n walking as of old we walked

eside the river's wooded reach,
The fortress, and the mountain ridge,
The cataract flashing from the bridge,
he breaker breaking on the beach.

LXXI.

ISEST thou thus, dim dawn, again,
And howlest, issuing out of night,
With blasts that blow the poplar white,
nd lash with storm the streaming pane?

Day, when my crowned estate begun
To pine in that reverse of doom,
Which sickened every living bloom,
nd blurred the splendor of the sun;

Who usherest in the dolorous hour
With thy quick tears that make the rose
Pull sideways, and the daisy close
Ier crimson fringes to the shower;

Who mightst have heaved a windless flame
Up the deep East, or, whispering, played
A checker-work of beam and shade
long the hills, yet looked the same,

As wan, as chill, as wild, as now;
Day, marked as with some hideous crime,
When the dark hand struck down throu
time,
And cancelled nature's best: but thou,

Lift as thou mayst thy burdened brows
Through clouds that drench the morni
star,
And whirl the ungarnered sheaf afar,
And sow the sky with flying boughs,

And up thy vault with roaring sound
Climb thy thick noon, disastrous day;
Touch thy dull goal of joyless gray,
And hide thy shame beneath the ground.

LXXII.

So many worlds, so much to do,
So little done, such things to be,
How know I what had need of thee,
For thou wert strong as thou wert true?

The fame is quenched that I foresaw,
The head hath missed an earthly wreath:
I curse not nature; no, nor death,
For nothing is that errs from law.

We pass: the path that each man trod
Is dim, or will be dim, with weeds:
What fame is left for human deeds
In endless age? It rests with God.

O hollow wraith of dying fame,
Fade wholly, while the soul exults,
And self-infolds the large results
Of force that would have forged a name.

LXXIII.

As sometimes in a dead man's face,
To those that watch it more and more,
A likeness hardly seen before
Comes out,—to some one of his race:

So, dearest, now thy brows are cold,
I see thee what thou art, and know
Thy likeness to the wise below,
Thy kindred with the great of old.

But there is more than I can see,
And what I see I leave unsaid,
Nor speak it, knowing Death has made
His darkness beautiful with thee.

LXXIV.

I LEAVE thy praises unexpressed
In verse that brings myself relief,
And by the measure of my grief
I leave thy greatness to be guessed;

What practice, howsoe'er expert
In fitting aptest words to things,
Or voice the richest-toned that sings,
Hath power to give thee as thou wert?

I care not, in these fading days,
To raise a cry that lasts not long,
And round thee with the breeze of song
To stir a little dust of praise.

Thy leaf has perished in the green,
And, while we breathe beneath the sun,
The world which credits what is done
Is cold to all that might have been.

So here shall silence guard thy fame;
But somewhere, out of human view,
Whate'er thy hands are set to do
Is wrought with tumult of acclaim.

LXXV.

Take wings of fancy, and ascend,
And in a moment set thy face
Where all the starry heavens of space
Are sharpened to a needle's end;

Take wings of foresight; lighten through
The secular abyss to come,
And lo! thy deepest lays are dumb
Before the mouldering of a yew;

And if the matin songs, that woke
The darkness of our planet, last,
Thine own shall wither in the vast,
Ere half the lifetime of an oak.

Ere these have clothed their branchy bowers
With fifty Mays, thy songs are vain;
And what are they when these remain
The ruined shells of hollow towers?

LXXVI.

What hope is here for modern rhyme
To him, who turns a musing eye
On songs, and deeds, and lives, that lie
Foreshortened in the tract of time?

These mortal lullabies of pain
May bind a book, may line a box,
May serve to curl a maiden's locks;
Or, when a thousand moons shall wane,

A man upon a stall may find,
And, passing, turn the page that tells
A grief,—then changed to something else,
Sung by a long forgotten mind.

But what of that? My darkened ways
Shall ring with music all the same;
To breathe my loss is more than fame,
To utter love more sweet than praise.

LXXVII.

Again at Christmas did we weave
The holly round the Christmas hearth,
The silent snow possessed the earth,
And calmly fell our Christmas eve;

The yule-clog sparkled keen with frost,
No wing of wind the region swept,
But over all things brooding slept
The quiet sense of something lost.

As in the winters left behind,
Again our ancient games had place,
The mimic pictures breathing grace,
And dance and song and hoodman-blind.

Who showed a token of distress?
No single tear, no mark of pain:
O sorrow, then can sorrow wane?
O grief, can grief be changed to less?

O last regret, regret can die!
No,—mixed with all this mystic frame,
Her deep relations are the same,
But with long use her tears are dry.

LXXVIII.

"More than my brothers are to me,"—
Let this not vex thee, noble heart!
I know thee of what force thou art,
To hold the costliest love in fee.

But thou and I are one in kind,
As moulded like in nature's mint;
And hill and wood and field did print
The same sweet forms in either mind.

For us the same cold streamlet curled
Through all his eddying coves; the same
All winds that roam the twilight came
In whispers of the beauteous world.

At one dear knee we proffered vows,
One lesson from one book we learned,
Ere childhood's flaxen ringlet turned
To black and brown on kindred brows.

And so my wealth resembles thine,
But he was rich where I was poor,
And he supplied my want the more
As his unlikeness fitted mine.

LXXIX.

If any vague desire should rise,
That holy Death, ere Arthur died,
Had moved me kindly from his side,
And dropped the dust on tearless eyes;

Then fancy shapes, as fancy can,
The grief my loss in him had wrought,
A grief as deep as life or thought,
But stayed in peace with God and man.

I make a picture in the brain;
I hear the sentence that he speaks;
He bears the burden of the weeks,
But turns his burden into gain.

His credit thus shall set me free;
And, influence-rich to soothe and save,
Unused example from the grave,
Reach out dead hands to comfort me.

LXXX.

Could I have said while he was here,
"My love shall now no further range,
There cannot come a mellower change,
For now is love mature in ear."

Love, then, had hope of richer store:
What end is here to my complaint?
This haunting whisper makes me faint,
"More years had made me love thee more."

But Death returns an answer sweet:
"My sudden frost was sudden gain,
And gave all ripeness to the grain,
It might have drawn from after-heat."

LXXXI.

I wage not any feud with Death
For changes wrought on form and face;
No lower life that earth's embrace
May breed with him can fright my faith.

Eternal process moving on,
From state to state the spirit walks;
And these are but the shattered stalks
Or ruined chrysalis of one.

Nor blame I Death, because he bare
The use of virtue out of earth;
I know transplanted human worth
Will bloom to profit, otherwhere.

For this alone on Death I wreak
The wrath that garners in my heart;
He put our lives so far apart
We cannot hear each other speak.

LXXXII.

Dip down upon the northern shore,
O sweet new year, delaying long;
Thou doest expectant nature wrong,
Delaying long, delay no more.

What stays thee from the clouded noons,
Thy sweetness from its proper place?
Can trouble live with April days,
Or sadness in the summer moons?

Bring orchis, bring the fox-glove spire,
The little speedwell's darling blue,
Deep tulips dashed with fiery dew,
Laburnums, dropping-wells of fire.

O thou, new year, delaying long,
Delayest the sorrow in my blood,
That longs to burst a frozen bud,
And flood a fresher throat with song.

LXXXIII.

When I contemplate, all alone,
The life that had been thine below,
And fix my thoughts on all the glow
To which thy crescent would have grown;

I see thee sitting crowned with good,
A central warmth diffusing bliss
In glance and smile, and clasp and kiss,
On all the branches of thy blood;

Thy blood, my friend, and partly mine;
For now the day was drawing on,
When thou shouldst link thy life with one
Of mine own house, and boys of thine

Had babbled "Uncle" on my knee;
But that remorseless iron hour
Made cypress of her orange-flower,
Despair of Hope, and earth of thee.

I seem to meet their least desire,
To clap their cheeks, to call them mine.
I see their unborn faces shine
Beside the never-lighted fire.

I see myself an honored guest,
Thy partner in the flowery walk
Of letters, genial table-talk,
Or deep dispute, and graceful jest:

While now thy prosperous labor fills
The lips of men with honest praise,
And sun by sun the happy days
Descend below the golden hills

With promise of a morn as fair;
And all the train of bounteous hours
Conduct, by paths of growing powers,
To reverence and the silver hair;

Till slowly worn her earthly robe,
Her lavish mission richly wrought,
Leaving great legacies of thought,
Thy spirit should fail from off the globe;

What time mine own might also flee,
As linked with thine in love and fate,
And, hovering o'er the dolorous strait
To the other shore, involved in thee,

Arrive at last the blessed goal,
And he that died in Holy Land
Would reach us out the shining hand,
And take us as a single soul.

What reed was that on which I leant?
Ah, backward fancy, wherefore wake
The old bitterness again, and break
The low beginnings of content?

LXXXIV.

This truth came borne with bier and pall,
I felt it, when I sorrowed most,
'Tis better to have loved and lost,
Than never to have loved at all ———

O true in word, and tried in deed,
Demanding, so to bring relief
To this which is our common grief,
What kind of life is that I lead;

And whether trust in things above
Be dimmed of sorrow, or sustained,
And whether love for him have drained
My capabilities of love;

Your words have virtue such as draws
A faithful answer from the breast,
Through light reproaches, half expressed,
And loyal unto kindly laws.

My blood an even tenor kept,
Till on mine ear this message falls,
That in Vienna's fatal walls
God's finger touched him, and he slept.

The great Intelligences fair
That range above our mortal state,
In circle round the blessed gate,
Received and gave him welcome there;

And led him through the blissful climes,
And showed him in the fountain fresh
All knowledge that the sons of flesh
Shall gather in the cycled times.

But I remained, whose hopes were dim,
Whose life, whose thoughts, were little worth,
To wander on a darkened earth,
Where all things round me breathed of him.

O friendship, equal-poised control,
O heart, with kindliest motion warm,
O sacred essence, other form,
O solemn ghost! O crowned soul!

Yet none could better know than I
How much of act at human hands
The sense of human will demands,
By which we dare to live or die.

Whatever way my days decline,
I felt and feel, though left alone,
His being working in mine own,
The footsteps of his life in mine;

A life that all the Muses decked
With gifts of grace that might express
All comprehensive tenderness,
All-subtilizing intellect:

And so my passion hath not swerved
To works of weakness, but I find
An image comforting the mind,
And in my grief a strength reserved.

Likewise the imaginative woe,
That loved to handle spiritual strife,
Diffused the shock through all my life,
But in the present broke the blow.

My pulses therefore beat again
For other friends that once I met;
Nor can it suit me to forget
The mighty hopes that make us men.

I woo your love: I count it crime
To mourn for any overmuch;
I, the divided half of such
A friendship as had mastered Time;

Which masters Time indeed, and is
Eternal, separate from fears.
The all-assuming months and years
Can take no part away from this:

But Summer on the steaming floods,
And Spring that swells the narrow brooks,
And Autumn with a noise of rooks,
That gather in the waning woods,

And every pulse of wind and wave
Recalls, in change of light or gloom,
My old affection of the tomb,
And my prime passion in the grave:

My old affection of the tomb,
A part of stillness yearns to speak:
"Arise, and get thee forth and seek
A friendship for the years to come.

"I watch thee from the quiet shore;
Thy spirit up to mine can reach;
But in dear words of human speech
We two communicate no more."

And I, "Can clouds of nature stain
The starry clearness of the free?
How is it? Canst thou feel for me
Some painless sympathy with pain?"

And lightly does the whisper fall:
"'Tis hard for thee to fathom this;
I triumph in conclusive bliss,
And that serene result of all."

So hold I commerce with the dead;
Or so methinks the dead would say;
Or so shall grief with symbols play,
And pining life be fancy-fed.

Now looking to some settled end,
That these things pass, and I shall prove
A meeting somewhere, love with love,
I crave your pardon, oh my friend;

If not so fresh, with love as true,
I, clasping brother-hands, aver
I could not, if I would, transfer
The whole I felt for him to you.

For which be they that hold apart
The promise of the golden hours?
First love, first friendship, equal powers,
That marry with the virgin heart.

Still mine that cannot but deplore,
That beats within a lonely place,
That yet remembers his embrace,
But at his footstep leaps no more,

My heart, though widowed, may not rest
Quite in the love of what is gone,
But seeks to beat in time with one
That warms another living breast.

Ah! take the imperfect gift I bring,
Knowing the primrose yet is dear,
The primrose of the later year,
As not unlike to that of Spring.

LXXXV.

Sweet after showers, ambrosial air,
That rollest from the gorgeous gloom
Of evening over brake and bloom
And meadow, slowly breathing bare

The round of space, and rapt below
Through all the dewy-tasselled wood,
And shadowing down the horned flood
In ripples, fan my brows and blow

The fever from my cheek, and sigh
The full new life that feeds thy breath
Throughout my frame, till Doubt and Death,
Ill brethren, let the fancy fly

From belt to belt of crimson seas,
On leagues of odor streaming far,
To where, in yonder orient star,
A hundred spirits whisper "Peace."

LXXXVI.

I passed beside the reverend walls
In which of old I wore the gown;
I roved at random through the town,
And saw the tumult of the halls;

And heard once more in college fanes
The storm their high-built organs make,
And thunder-music, rolling, shake
The prophets blazoned on the panes;

And caught once more the distant shout,
The measured pulse of racing oars
Among the willows; paced the shores
And many a bridge, and all about

The same gray flats again, and felt
The same, but not the same; and last,
Up that long walk of limes I passed,
To see the rooms in which he dwelt.

Another name was on the door:
I lingered; all within was noise
Of songs, and clapping hands, and boys
That crashed the glass and beat the floor;

Where once we held debate, a band
Of youthful friends, on mind and art,
And labor, and the changing mart,
And all the framework of the land;

When one would aim an arrow fair,
But send it slackly from the string;
And one would pierce an outer ring,
And one an inner, here and there;

And last, the master-bowman, he
Would cleave the mark. A willing ear
We lent him. Who, but hung to hear
The rapt oration flowing free

From point to point with power and grace,
And music in the bounds of law,
To those conclusions when we saw
The God within him light his face,

And seem to lift the form, and glow
In azure orbits heavenly-wise;
And over those ethereal eyes
The bar of Michael Angelo.

LXXXVII.

Wild bird, whose warble, liquid sweet,
Rings Eden through the budded quicks,
O, tell me where the senses mix,
O, tell me where the passions meet,

Whence radiate: fierce extremes employ
Thy spirits in the darkening leaf,
And in the midmost heart of grief
Thy passion clasps a secret joy:

And I,—my harp would prelude woe,—
I cannot all command the strings;
The glory of the sum of things
Will flash along the chords and go.

LXXXVIII.

Witch-elms, that counterchange the floor
Of this flat lawn with dusk and bright;
And thou, with all thy breadth and height
Of foliage, towering sycamore;

How often, hither wandering down,
My Arthur found your shadows fair,
And shook to all the liberal air
The dust and din and steam of town!

He brought an eye for all he saw;
He mixed in all our simple sports;
They pleased him, fresh from brawling court
And dusky purlieus of the law.

O joy to him, in this retreat,
Immantled in ambrosial dark,
To drink the cooler air, and mark
The landscape winking through the heat!

O sound to rout the brood of cares,
The sweep of scythe in morning dew,
The gust that round the garden flew,
And tumbled half the mellowing pears!

O bliss, when all in circle drawn
About him, heart and ear were fed
To hear him, as he lay and read
The Tuscan poets on the lawn:

Or in the all-golden afternoon
A guest, or happy sister, sung,
Or here she brought the harp, and flung
A ballad to the brightening moon:

Nor less it pleased, in livelier moods,
Beyond the bounding hill to stray.
And break the livelong summer day
With banquet in the distant woods;

Whereat we glanced from theme to theme,
Discussed the books to love or hate,
Or touched the changes of the state,
Or threaded some Socratic dream;

But if I praised the busy town,
He loved to rail against it still,
For "ground in yonder social mill,
We rub each other's angles down,

"And merge," he said, "in form and gloss,
The picturesque of man and man."
We talked: the stream beneath us ran,
The wine-flask lying couched in moss,

Or cooled within the glooming wave,
And last, returning from afar,
Before the crimson-circled star
Had fallen into her father's grave,

And brushing ankle-deep in flowers,
We heard behind the woodbine veil
The milk that bubbled in the pail,
And buzzings of the honeyed hours.

LXXXIX.

He tasted love with half his mind,
Nor ever drank the inviolate spring
Where nighest heaven, who first could fling
This bitter seed among mankind;

That could the dead, whose dying eyes
Were closed with wail, resume their life,
They would but find in child and wife
An iron welcome when they rise:

'Twas well, indeed, when warm with wine,
To pledge them with a kindly tear:
To talk them over, to wish them here,
To count their memories half divine;

But if they came who passed away,
Behold their brides in other hands:
The hard heir strides about their lands,
And will not yield them for a day.

Yea, though their sons were none of these,
Not less the yet-loved sire would make
Confusion worse than death, and shake
The pillars of domestic peace.

Ah dear, but come thou back to me:
Whatever change the years have wrought,
I find not yet one lonely thought
That cries against my wish for thee.

XC.

When rosy plumelets tuft the larch,
And rarely pipes the mounted thrush;
Or underneath the barren bush
Flits by the sea-blue bird of March;

Come, wear the form by which I know
Thy spirit in time among thy peers;
The hope of unaccomplished years
Be large and lucid round thy brow.

When summer's hourly-mellowing change
May breathe with many roses sweet
Upon the thousand waves of wheat,
That ripple round the lonely grange;

Come: not in watches of the night,
But where the sunbeam broodeth warm,
Come, beauteous in thine after form,
And like a finer light in light.

XCI.

If any vision should reveal
Thy likeness, I might count it vain,
As but the canker of the brain;
Yea, though it spake and made appeal

To chances where our lots were cast
Together in the days behind,
I might but say, I hear a wind
Of memory murmuring the past.

Yea, though it spake and bared to view
A fact within the coming year;
And though the months, revolving near,
Should prove the phantom-warning true,

They might not seem thy prophecies,
But spiritual presentiments,
And such refraction of events
As often rises ere they rise.

XCII.

I SHALL not see thee. Dare I say
No spirit ever brake the band
That stays him from the native land
Where first he walked when clasped in clay?

No visual shade of some one lost,
But he, the Spirit himself, may come
Where all the nerve of sense is numb;
Spirit to Spirit, Ghost to Ghost.

O, therefore from thy sightless range
With gods in unconjectured bliss,
O, from the distance of the abyss
Of tenfold-complicated change,

Descend, and touch, and enter; hear
The wish too strong for words to name;
That in this blindness of the frame
My Ghost may feel that thine is near.

XCIII.

How pure at heart and sound in head,
With what divine affections bold,
Should be the man whose thought would hold
An hour's communion with the dead.

In vain shalt thou, or any, call
The spirits from their golden day,
Except, like them, thou too canst say,
My spirit is at peace with all.

They haunt the silence of the breast,
Imaginations calm and fair,
The memory like a cloudless air,
The conscience as a sea at rest:

But when the heart is full of din,
And doubt beside the portal waits,
They can but listen at the gates,
And hear the household jar within.

XCIV.

By night we lingered on the lawn,
For under foot the herb was dry;
And genial warmth; and o'er the sky
The silvery haze of summer drawn;

And calm that let the tapers burn
Unwavering: not a cricket chirred:
The brook alone far off was heard,
And on the board the fluttering urn:

And bats went round in fragrant skies,
And wheeled or lit the filmy shapes
That haunt the dusk, with ermine capes
And woolly breasts and beaded eyes;

While now we sang old songs that pealed
From knoll to knoll, where, couched at ease,
The white kine glimmered, and the trees
Laid their dark arms about the field.

But when those others, one by one,
Withdrew themselves from me and night,
And in the house light after light
Went out, and I was all alone,

A hunger seized my heart; I read
Of that glad year which once had been,
In those fallen leaves which kept their green,
The noble letters of the dead:

And strangely on the silence broke
The silent-speaking words, and strange
Was love's dumb cry defying change
To test his worth; and strangely spoke

The faith, the vigor, bold to dwell
On doubts that drive the coward back,
And keen through wordy snares to track
Suggestion to her inmost cell.

So word by word, and line by line,
The dead man touched me from the past,
And all at once it seemed at last
His living soul was flashed on mine,

And mine in his was wound, and whirled
About empyreal heights of thought,
And came on that which is, and caught
The deep pulsations of the world,

Æonian music measuring out
The steps of Time—the shocks of Chance,—
The blows of Death. At length my trance
Was cancelled, stricken through with doubt.

Vague words! but ah, how hard to frame
In matter-moulded forms of speech,
Or even for intellect to reach
Through memory that which I became:

Till now the doubtful dusk revealed
The knolls once more where, couched at ease,
The white kine glimmered, and the trees
Laid their dark arms about the field:

And sucked from out the distant gloom,
A breeze began to tremble o'er
The large leaves of the sycamore,
And fluctuate all the still perfume,

And gathering freshlier overhead,
Rocked the full-foliaged elms, and swung
The heavy-folded rose, and flung
The lilies to and fro, and said

"The dawn, the dawn," and died away;
And East and West, without a breath,
Mixed their dim lights, like life and death,
To broaden into boundless day.

XCV.

You say, but with no touch of scorn,
Sweet-hearted, you, whose light-blue eyes
Are tender over drowning flies,
You tell me, doubt is Devil-born.

I know not: one indeed I knew
In many a subtile question versed,
Who touched a jarring lyre at first,
But ever strove to make it true:

Perplexed in faith, but pure in deeds,
At last he beat his music out.
There lives more faith in honest doubt,
Believe me, than in half the creeds.

He fought his doubts and gathered strength,
He would not make his judgment blind,
He faced the spectres of the mind
And laid them: thus he came at length

To find a stronger faith his own;
And Power was with him in the night,
Which makes the darkness and the light,
And dwells not in the light alone,

But in the darkness and the cloud,
As over Sinai's peaks of old,
While Israel made their gods of gold,
Although the trumpet blew so loud.

XCVI.

My love has talked with rocks and trees,
He finds on misty mountain-ground
His own vast shadow glory-crowned,
He sees himself in all he sees.

Two partners of a married life,—
I looked on these and thought of thee
In vastness and in mystery,
And of my spirit as of a wife.

These two,—they dwelt with eye on eye,
Their hearts of old have beat in tune,
Their meetings made December June,
Their every parting was to die.

Their love has never passed away;
The days she never can forget
Are earnest that he loves her yet,
Whate'er the faithless people say.

Her life is lone, he sits apart,
He loves her yet, she will not weep,
Though, rapt in matters dark and deep,
He seems to slight her simple heart.

He thrids the labyrinth of the mind,
He reads the secret of the star,
He seems so near and yet so far,
He looks so cold: she thinks him kind.

She keeps the gift of years before,
A withered violet is her bliss;
She knows not what his greatness is;
For that, for all, she loves him more.

For him she plays, to him she sings
Of early faith and plighted vows;
She knows but matters of the house,
And he, he knows a thousand things.

Her faith is fixed and cannot move,
She darkly feels him great and wise,
She dwells on him with faithful eyes,
"I cannot understand: I love."

XCVII.

You leave us; you will see the Rhine,
And those fair hills I sailed below,
When I was there with him; and go
By summer belts of wheat and vine

To where he breathed his latest breath,
That City. All her splendor seems
No livelier than the wisp that gleams
On Lethe in the eyes of Death.

Let her great Danube rolling fair
Enwind her isles, unmarked of me:
I have not seen, I will not see
Vienna: rather dream that there,

A treble darkness, Evil haunts
The birth, the bridal; friend from friend
Is oftener parted, fathers bend
Above more graves, a thousand wants

Gnarr at the heels of men, and prey
By each cold hearth, and sadness flings
Her shadow on the blaze of kings;
And yet myself have heard him say,

That not in any mother town
With statelier progress to and fro
The double tides of chariots flow
By park and suburb under brown

Of lustier leaves; nor more content,
He told me, lives in any crowd,
When all is gay with lamps, and loud
With sport and song, in booth and tent,

Imperial halls, or open plain;
And wheels the circled dance, and breaks
The rocket molten into flakes
Of crimson or in emerald rain.

XCVIII.

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,
So loud with voices of the birds,
So thick with lowings of the herds,
Day, when I lost the flower of men;

Who tremblest through thy darkling red
On yon swollen brook that bubbles fast
By meadows breathing of the past,
And woodlands holy to the dead;

Who murmurest in the foliaged eaves
A song that slights the coming care,
And Autumn laying here and there
A fiery finger on the leaves;

Who wakenest with thy balmy breath
To myriads on the genial earth,
Memories of bridal, or of birth,
And unto myriads more, of death.

O, wheresoever those may be,
Betwixt the slumber of the poles,
To-day they count as kindred souls;
They know me not, but mourn with me.

XCIX.

I CLIMB the hill: from end to end,
Of all the landscape underneath,
I find no place that does not breathe
Some gracious memory of my friend;

No gray old grange, or lonely fold,
Or low morass and whispering reed,
Or simple stile from mead to mead,
Or sheepwalk up the windy wold;

Nor hoary knoll of ash and haw
That hears the latest linnet trill,
Nor quarry trenched along the hill,
And haunted by the wrangling daw;

Nor runlet tinkling from the rock;
Nor pastoral rivulet that swerves
To left and right through meadowy curves,
That feed the mothers of the flock;

But each has pleased a kindred eye,
And each reflects a kindlier day;
And, leaving these, to pass away,
I think once more he seems to die.

C.

UNWATCHED the garden bough shall sway,
The tender blossom flutter down,
Unloved that beech will gather brown,
This maple burn itself away;

Unloved, the sunflower, shining fair,
Ray round with flames her disk of seed,
And many a rose-carnation feed
With summer spice the humming air;

Unloved, by many a sandy bar,
The brook shall babble down the plain,
At noon, or when the lesser wain
Is twisting round the polar star;

Uncared for, gird the windy grove,
And flood the haunts of hern and crake,
Or into silver arrows break
The sailing moon in creek and cove;

Till from the garden and the wild
A fresh association blow,
And year by year the landscape grow
Familiar to the stranger's child;

As year by year the laborer tills
His wonted glebe, or lops the glades;
And year by year our memory fades
From all the circle of the hills.

CI.

We leave the well-beloved place
Where first we gazed upon the sky;
The roofs that heard our earliest cry
Will shelter one of stranger race.

We go, but ere we go from home,
As down the garden-walks I move,
Two spirits of a diverse love
Contend for loving masterdom.

One whispers, here thy boyhood sung
Long since its matin song, and heard
The low love-language of the bird
In native hazels tassel-hung.

The other answers, "Yea, but here
Thy feet have strayed in after hours
With thy lost friend among the bowers,
And this hath made them trebly dear."

These two have striven half the day,
And each prefers his separate claim,
Poor rivals in a losing game,
That will not yield each other way.

I turn to go: my feet are set
To leave the pleasant fields and farms;
They mix in one another's arms
To one pure image of regret.

CII.

On that last night before we went
From out the doors where I was bred,
I dreamed a vision of the dead,
Which left my after morn content.

Methought I dwelt within a hall,
And maidens with me; distant hills
From hidden summits fed with rills
A river sliding by the wall.

The hall with harp and carol rang.
They sang of what is wise and good
And graceful. In the centre stood
A statue veiled, to which they sang;

And which, though veiled, was known to me,
The shape of him I loved, and love
Forever: then flew in a dove,
And brought a summons from the sea:

And when they learnt that I must go,
They wept and wailed, but led the way
To where a little shallop lay
At anchor in the flood below;

And on by many a level mead,
And shadowing bluff that made the banks,
We glided, winding under ranks
Of iris, and the golden reed;

And still, as vaster grew the shore,
And rolled the floods in grander space,
The maidens gathered strength and grace,
And presence lordlier than before;

And I myself, who sat apart
And watched them, waxed in every limb;
I felt the thews of Anakim,
The pulses of a Titan's heart;

As one would sing the death of war,
And one would chant the history
Of that great race, which is to be,
And one the shaping of a star;

Until the forward-creeping tides
Began to foam, and we to draw
From deep to deep, to where we saw
A great ship lift her shining sides.

The man we loved was there on deck,
But thrice as large as man he bent
To greet us. Up the side I went,
And fell in silence on his neck:

Whereat those maidens, with one mind,
Bewailed their lot; I did them wrong:
"We served thee here," they said, "so lon
And wilt thou leave us now behind?"

So rapt I was, they could not win
An answer from my lips, but he
Replying, "Enter likewise ye
And go with us:" they entered in.

And while the wind began to sweep
A music out of sheet and shroud,
We steered her toward a crimson cloud
That landlike slept along the deep.

CIII.

The time draws near the birth of Christ;
The moon is hid, the night is still;
A single church below the hill
Is pealing, folded in the mist.

A single peal of bells below,
That wakens at this hour of rest
A single murmur in the breast,
That these are not the bells I know.

Like strangers' voices here they sound,
In lands where not a memory strays,
Nor landmark breathes of other days,
But all is new, unhallowed ground.

CIV.

This holly by the cottage-eave,
To-night, ungathered, shall it stand:
We live within the stranger's land,
And strangely falls our Christmas eve.

Our father's dust is left alone
And silent under other snows:
There in due time the woodbine blows,
The violet comes, but we are gone.

No more shall wayward grief abuse
The genial hour with mask and mime;
For change of place, like growth of time,
Has broke the bond of dying use.

Let cares that petty shadows cast,
By which our lives are chiefly proved,
A little spare the night I loved,
And hold it solemn to the past.

But let no footstep beat the floor,
Nor bowl of wassail mantle warm:
For who would keep an ancient form
Through which the spirit breathes no more?

Be neither song, nor game, nor feast,
Nor harp be touched, nor flute be blown;
No dance, no motion, save alone
What lightens in the lucid east

Of rising worlds by yonder wood.
Long sleeps the summer in the seed;
Run out your measured arcs, and lead
The closing cycle rich in good.

CV.

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light;
The year is dying in the night;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

ing out the grief that saps the mind,
For those that here we see no more;
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
ing in redress to all mankind.

ing out a slowly dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife;
Ring in the nobler modes of life,
Vith sweeter manners, purer laws.

ing out the want, the care, the sin,
The faithless coldness of the times;
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,
ut ring the fuller minstrel in.

ing out false pride in place and blood,
The civic slander and the spite;
Ring in the love of truth and right,
ing in the common love of good.

ing out old shapes of foul disease,
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
ing in the thousand years of peace.

ing in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
ing in the Christ that is to be.

CVI.

T is the day when he was born,
A bitter day that early sank
Behind a purple-frosty bank
Of vapor, leaving night forlorn.

The time admits not flowers or leaves
To deck the banquet. Fiercely flies
The blast of North and East, and ice
Makes daggers at the sharpened eaves,

And bristles all the brakes and thorns
To yon hard crescent, as she hangs
Above the wood which grides and clangs
Its leafless ribs and iron horns

Together, in the drifts that pass,
To darken on the rolling brine
That breaks the coast. But fetch the wine
Arrange the board and brim the glass;

Bring in great logs and let them lie,
To make a solid core of heat;
Be cheerful-minded, talk and treat
Of all things even as he were by:

We keep the day. With festal cheer,
With books and music, surely we
Will drink to him, whate'er he be,
And sing the songs he loved to hear.

CVII.

I WILL not shut me from my kind;
And, lest I stiffen into stone,
I will not eat my heart alone,
Nor feed with sighs a passing wind:

What profit lies in barren faith,
And vacant yearning, though with might
To scale the heaven's highest height,
Or dive below the wells of Death?

What find I in the highest place,
But mine own phantom chanting hymns?
And on the depths of death there swims
The reflex of a human face.

I'll rather take what fruit may be
Of sorrow under human skies:
'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise,
Whatever wisdom sleep with thee.

CVIII.

Heart-affluence in discursive talk
From household fountains never dry;
The critic clearness of an eye,
That saw through all the Muses' walk;

Seraphic intellect and force
To seize and throw the doubts of man;
Impassioned logic, which outran
The hearer in its fiery course;

High nature amorous of the good,
But touched with no ascetic gloom;
And passion pure in snowy bloom
Through all the years of April blood;

A love of freedom rarely felt,
Of freedom in her regal seat
Of England, not the schoolboy heat,
The blind hysterics of the Celt;

And manhood fused with female grace
In such a sort, the child would twine
A trustful hand, unasked, in thine,
And find his comfort in thy face;

All these have been, and thee mine eyes
Have looked on: if they looked in vain,
My shame is greater who remain,
Nor let thy wisdom make me wise.

CIX.

Thy converse drew us with delight,
The men of rathe and riper years:
The feeble soul, a haunt of fears,
Forgot his weakness in thy sight.

On thee the loyal-hearted hung,
The proud was half disarmed of pride,
Nor cared the serpent at thy side
To flicker with his double tongue.

The stern were mild when thou wert by,
The flippant put himself to school
And heard thee, and the brazen fool
Was softened, and he knew not why;

While I, thy dearest, sat apart,
And felt thy triumph was as mine;
And loved them more, that they were thine,
The graceful tact, the Christian art;

Not mine the sweetness or the skill,
But mine the love that will not tire,
And, born of love, the vague desire
That spurs an imitative will.

CX.

The churl in spirit, up or down,
Along the scale of ranks, through all
To him who grasps a golden ball
By blood a king, at heart a clown;

The churl in spirit, howe'er he veil
His want in forms for fashion's sake,
Will let his coltish nature break
At seasons through the gilded pale:

For who can always act? but he,
To whom a thousand memories call,
Not being less but more than all
The gentleness he seemed to be,

Best seemed the thing he was, and joined
Each office of the social hour
To noble manners, as the flower
And native growth of noble mind;

Nor ever narrowness or spite,
Or villain fancy fleeting by,
Drew in the expression of an eye,
Where God and Nature met in light,

And thus he bore without abuse
The grand old name of gentleman
Defamed by every charlatan,
And soiled with all ignoble use.

CXI.

High wisdom holds my wisdom less,
That I, who gaze with temperate eyes
On glorious insufficiencies,
Set light by narrower perfectness.

But thou, that fillest all the room
Of all my love, art reason why
I seem to cast a careless eye
On souls, the lesser lords of doom.

For what wert thou? some novel power
Sprang up forever at a touch,
And hope could never hope too much,
In watching thee from hour to hour,

Large elements in order brought,
And tracts of calm from tempest made,
And world-wide fluctuation swayed
In vassal tides that followed thought.

CXII.

'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise;
Yet how much wisdom sleeps with thee
Which not alone had guided me,
But served the seasons that may rise;

For can I doubt who knew thee keen
In intellect, with force and skill
To strive, to fashion, to fulfil,—
I doubt not what thou wouldst have been:

A life in civic action warm,
A soul on highest mission sent,
A potent voice of Parliament,
A pillar steadfast in the storm,

Should licensed boldness gather force,
Becoming, when the time has birth,
A lever to uplift the earth
And roll it in another course,

With thousand shocks that come and go,
With agonies, with energies,
With overthrowings, and with cries,
And undulations to and fro.

CXIII.

Who loves not Knowledge? Who shall rail
Against her beauty? May she mix
With men and prosper! Who shall fix
Her pillars? Let her work prevail.

But on her forehead sits a fire:
She sets her forward countenance
And leaps into the future chance,
Submitting all things to desire.

Half-grown as yet, a child, and vain,—
She cannot fight the fear of death.
What is she, cut from love and faith,
But some wild Pallas from the brain

Of Demons? fiery-hot to burst
All barriers in her onward race
For power. Let her know her place,
She is the second, not the first.

A higher hand must make her mild,
If all be not in vain; and guide
Her footsteps, moving side by side
With wisdom, like the younger child;

For she is earthly of the mind,
But wisdom heavenly of the soul.
O friend, who camest to thy goal
So early, leaving me behind,

I would the great world grew like thee
Who grewest not alone in power
And knowledge, but by year and hour
In reverence and in charity.

CXIV.

Now fades the last long streak of snow,
Now burgeons every maze of quick
About the flowering squares, and thick
By ashen roots the violets blow.

Now rings the woodland loud and long,
The distance takes a lovelier hue,
And drowned in yonder living blue
The lark becomes a sightless song.

Now dance the lights on lawn and lea,
The flocks are whiter down the vale,
And milkier every milky sail
On winding stream or distant sea;

Where now the seamew pipes, or dives
In yonder greening gleam, and fly
The happy birds, that change their sky
To build and brood; that live their lives

From land to land; and in my breast
Spring wakens too; and my regret
Becomes an April violet,
And buds and blossoms like the rest.

CXV.

Is it, then, regret for buried time
That keenlier in sweet April wakes,
And meets the year, and gives and takes
The colors of the crescent prime?

Not all; the songs, the stirring air,
The life re-orient out of dust,
Cry through the sense to hearten trust
In that which made the world so fair.

Not all regret; the face will shine
Upon me, while I muse alone;
And that dear voice, I once have known,
Still speak to me of me and mine:

Yet less of sorrow lives in me
For days of happy commune dead;
Less yearning for the friendship fled,
Than some strong bond which is to be.

CXVI.

O DAYS and hours, your work is this,
To hold me from my proper place,
A little while from his embrace,
For fuller gain of after bliss:

That out of distance might ensue
Desire of nearness doubly sweet;
And unto meeting, when we meet,
Delight a hundredfold accrue,

For every grain of sand that runs,
And every span of shade that steals,
And every kiss of toothed wheels,
And all the courses of the suns.

CXVII.

CONTEMPLATE all this work of Time,
The giant laboring in his youth;
Nor dream of human love and truth,
As dying Nature's earth and lime;

But trust that those we call the dead
Are breathers of an ampler day
For ever nobler ends. They say,
The solid earth whereon we tread

In tracts of fluent heat began,
And grew to seeming-random forms,
The seeming prey of cyclic storms,
Till at the last arose the man;

Who throve and branched from clime to clime,
The herald of a higher race,
And of himself in higher place,
If so he type this work of time

Within himself, from more to more;
And, crowned with attributes of woe
Like glories, move his course, and show
That life is not as idle ore,

But iron dug from central gloom,
And heated hot with burning fears;
And dipped in baths of hissing tears,
And battered with the shocks of doom

To shape and use. Arise and fly
The reeling Faun, the sensual feast;
Move upward, working out the beast,
And let the ape and tiger die.

CXVIII.

Doors, where my heart was used to beat
So quickly, not as one that weeps
I come once more; the city sleeps;
I smell the meadow in the street;

I hear a chirp of birds; I see
Betwixt the black fronts long withdrawn
A light-blue lane of early dawn,
And think of early days and thee,

And bless thee, for thy lips are bland,
And bright the friendship of thine eye;
And in my thoughts with scarce a sigh
I take the pressure of thine hand.

CXIX.

I TRUST I have not wasted breath:
I think we are not wholly brain,
Magnetic mockeries; not in vain,
Like Paul with beasts, I fought with Death;

Not only cunning casts in clay:
Let Science prove we are, and then
What matters Science unto men,
At least to me? I would not stay.

Let him, the wiser man who springs
Hereafter, up from childhood shape
His action like the greater ape,
But I was born to other things.

CXX.

SAD Hesper o'er the buried sun,
And ready, thou, to die with him,
Thou watchest all things ever dim
And dimmer, and a glory done:

The team is loosened from the wain,
The boat is drawn upon the shore;
Thou listenest to the closing door,
And life is darkened in the brain.

Bright Phosphor, fresher for the night,
By thee the world's great work is heard
Beginning, and the wakeful bird;
Behind thee comes the greater light:

The market-boat is on the stream,
And voices hail it from the brink;
Thou hear'st the village hammer clink,
And seest the moving of the team.

Sweet Hesper-Phosphor, double name
For what is one, the first, the last,
Thou, like my present and my past,
Thy place is changed, thou art the same.

CXXI.

O, WAST thou with me, dearest, then,
While I rose up against my doom,
And strove to burst the folded gloom,
To bare the eternal Heavens again,

To feel once more, in placid awe,
The strong imagination roll
A sphere of stars about my soul,
In all her motion one with law;

If thou wert with me, and the grave
Divide us not, be with me now,
And enter in at breast and brow,
Till all my blood, a fuller wave,

Be quickened with a livelier breath,
And like an inconsiderate boy,
As in the former flash of joy,
I slip the thoughts of life and death,

And all the breeze of Fancy blows,
And every dew-drop paints a bow;
The wizard lightnings deeply glow,
And every thought breaks out a rose.

CXXII.

THERE rolls the deep where grew the tree.
O earth, what changes hast thou seen!
There where the long street roars, hath been
The stillness of the central sea.

The hills are shadows, and they flow
From form to form, and nothing stands;
They melt like mist, the solid lands,
Like clouds they shape themselves and go.

But in my spirit will I dwell,
And dream my dream, and hold it true;
For though my lips may breathe adieu,
I cannot think the thing farewell.

CXXIII.

That which we dare invoke to bless;
Our dearest faith, our ghastliest doubt;
He, They, One, All; within, without;
The Power in darkness whom we guess;

I found Him not in world or sun,
Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye;
Nor through the questions men may try,
The petty cobwebs we have spun:

If e'er when faith had fallen asleep,
I heard a voice, "Believe no more,"
And heard an ever-breaking shore
That tumbled in the Godless deep;

A warmth within the breast would melt
The freezing reason's colder part,
And like a man in wrath the heart
Stood up and answered, "I have felt."

No, like a child in doubt and fear:
But that blind clamor made me wise;
Then was I as a child that cries,
But, crying, knows his father near;

And what I seem beheld again
What is, and no man understands;
And out of darkness came the hands
That reach through nature, moulding men.

CXXIV.

WHATEVER I have said or sung,
Some bitter notes my harp would give,
Yea, though there often seemed to live
A contradiction on the tongue,

Yet Hope had never lost her youth;
She did but look through dimmer eyes;
Or Love but played with gracious lies,
Because he felt so fixed in truth:

And if the song were full of care,
He breathed the spirit of the song;
And if the words were sweet and strong,
He set his royal signet there;

Abiding with me till I sail
To seek thee on the mystic deeps,
And this electric force, that keeps
A thousand pulses dancing, fail.

CXXV.

LOVE is and was my Lord and King,
And in his presence I attend
To hear the tidings of my friend,
Which every hour his couriers bring.

Love is and was my King and Lord,
And will be, though as yet I keep
Within his court on earth, and sleep
Encompassed by his faithful guard,

And hear at times a sentinel
Who moves about from place to place,
And whispers to the worlds of space
In the deep night, that all is well.

CXXVI.

And all is well, though faith and form
Be sundered in the night of fear;
Well roars the storm to those that hear
A deeper voice across the storm,

Proclaiming social truth shall spread,
And justice, ev'n though thrice again
The red fool-fury of the Seine
Should pile her barricades with dead.

But ill for him that wears a crown,
And him, the lazar, in his rags:
They tremble, the sustaining crags;
The spires of ice are toppled down,

And molten up, and roar in flood;
The fortress crashes from on high,
The brute earth lightens to the sky,
And the vast Æon sinks in blood,

And compassed by the fires of Hell,
While thou, dear spirit, happy star,
O'erlook'st the tumult from afar,
And smilest, knowing all is well.

CXXVII.

The love that rose on stronger wings,
Unpalsied when he met with Death,
Is comrade of the lesser faith
That sees the course of human things.

No doubt, vast eddies in the flood
Of onward time shall yet be made,
And throned races may degrade;
Yet, oh ye mysteries of good,

Wild Hours that fly with Hope and Fear,
If all your office had to do
With old results that look like new,
If this were all your mission here,

To draw, to sheathe a useless sword,
To fool the crowd with glorious lies,
To cleave a creed in sects and cries,
To change the bearing of a word,

To shift an arbitrary power,
To cramp the student at his desk,
To make old bareness picturesque
And tuft with grass a feudal tower;

Why then my scorn might well descend
On you and yours. I see in part
That all, as in some piece of art,
Is toil coöperant to an end.

CXXVIII.

Dear friend, far off, my lost desire,
So far, so near, in woe and weal;
O, loved the most when most I feel
There is a lower and a higher;

Known and unknown, human, divine!
Sweet human hand and lips and eye,
Dear heavenly friend that canst not die,
Mine, mine, forever, ever mine!

Strange friend, past, present, and to be,
Loved deeplier, darklier understood;
Behold I dream a dream of good
And mingle all the world with thee.

CXXIX.

THY voice is on the rolling air;
I hear thee where the waters run;
Thou standest in the rising sun,
And in the setting thou art fair.

What art thou, then? I cannot guess;
But though I seem in star and flower
To feel thee, some diffusive power,
I do not therefore love thee less:

My love involves the love before;
My love is vaster passion now;
Though mixed with God and Nature thou,
I seem to love thee more and more.

Far off thou art, but ever nigh;
I have thee still, and I rejoice:
I prosper, circled with thy voice;
I shall not lose thee, though I die.

CXXX.

O LIVING will that shalt endure
When all that seems shall suffer shock,
Rise in the spiritual rock,
Flow through our deeds and make them pure,

That we may lift from out the dust
A voice as unto him that hears,
A cry above the conquered years
To one that with us works, and trust,

With faith that comes of self-control,
The truths that never can be proved
Until we close with all we loved,
And all we flow from, soul in soul.

O TRUE and tried, so well and long,
Demand not thou a marriage lay;
In that it is thy marriage day
Is music more than any song.

Nor have I felt so much of bliss
Since first he told me that he loved
A daughter of our house; nor proved
Since that dark day a day like this;

Though I since then have numbered o'er
Some thrice three years: they went and came,
Remade the blood and changed the frame,
And yet is love not less, but more;

No longer caring to embalm
In dying songs a dead regret,
But like a statue solid-set,
And moulded in colossal calm.

Regret is dead, but love is more
Than in the summers that are flown,
For I myself with these have grown
To something greater than before;

Which makes appear the songs I made
As echoes out of weaker times,
As half but idle brawling rhymes,
The sport of random sun and shade.

But where is she, the bridal flower,
That must be made a wife ere noon?
She enters, glowing like the moon
Of Eden on its bridal bower:

On me she bends her blissful eyes
And then on thee; they meet thy look,
And brighten like the star that shook
Betwixt the palms of paradise.

O, when her life was yet in bud,
He too foretold the perfect rose.
For thee she grew, for thee she grows
Forever, and as fair as good.

And thou art worthy; full of power;
As gentle; liberal-minded, great,
Consistent; wearing all that weight
Of learning lightly like a flower.

But now set out: the noon is near,
And I must give away the bride;
She fears not, or with thee beside
And me behind her, will not fear:

For I that danced her on my knee,
That watched her on her nurse's arm,
That shielded all her life from harm,
At last must part with her to thee;

Now waiting to be made a wife,
Her feet, my darling, on the dead;
Their pensive tablets round her head,
And the most living words of life

Breathed in her ear. The ring is on,
The "wilt thou" answered, and again
The "wilt thou" asked, till out of twain
Her sweet "I will" has made ye one.

Now sign your names, which shall be read
Mute symbols of a joyful morn,
By village eyes as yet unborn;
The names are signed, and overhead

Begins the clash and clang that tells
The joy to every wandering breeze;
The blind wall rocks, and on the trees
The dead leaf trembles to the bells.

O happy hour! and happier hours
Await them. Many a merry face
Salutes them,—maidens of the place,
That pelt us in the porch with flowers.

O happy hour! behold the bride
With him to whom her hand I gave.
They leave the porch, they pass the grave
That has to-day its sunny side.

To-day the grave is bright for me,
For them the light of life increased
Who stay to share the morning feast,
Who rest to-night beside the sea.

Let all my genial spirits advance
To meet and greet a whiter sun;
My drooping memory will not shun
The foaming grape of eastern France.

It circles round, and fancy plays,
And hearts are warmed and faces bloom,
As drinking health to bride and groom,
We wish them store of happy days.

Nor count me all to blame if I
Conjecture of a stiller guest,
Perchance, perchance, among the rest,
And, though in silence, wishing joy.

But they must go; the time draws on,
And those white-favored horses wait;
They rise, but linger, it is late;
Farewell, we kiss, and they are gone.

A shade falls on us like the dark
From little cloudlets on the grass,
But sweeps away as out we pass
To range the woods, to roam the park,

Discussing how their courtship grew,
And talk of others that are wed,
And how she looked, and what he said,
And back we come at fall of dew.

Again the feast, the speech, the glee,
The shade of passing thought, the wealth
Of words and wit, the double health,
The crowning cup, the three times three,

And last the dance;—till I retire:
Dumb is that tower which spake so loud,
And high in heaven the streaming cloud,
And on the downs a rising fire:

And rise, O moon, from yonder down,
Till over down and over dale
All night the shining vapor sail
And pass the silent-lighted town,

The white-faced halls, the glancing rills,
And catch at every mountain head,
And o'er the friths that branch and spread
Their sleeping silver through the hills;

And touch with shade the bridal doors,
With tender gloom the roof, the wall;
And breaking let the splendor fall
To spangle all the happy shores

By which they rest, and ocean sounds,
And, star and system rolling past,
A soul shall draw from out the vast
And strike his being into bounds,

And, moved through life of lower phase,
Result in man, be born and think,
And act and love, a closer link
Betwixt us and the crowning race

Of those that, eye to eye, shall look
On knowledge; under whose command
Is Earth and Earth's, and in their hand
Is Nature like an open book;

No longer half-akin to brute,
For all we thought and loved and did,
And hoped, and suffered, is but seed
Of what in them is flower and fruit;

Whereof the man, that with me trod
This planet, was a noble type
Appearing ere the times were ripe,
That friend of mine who lives in God,

That God, which ever lives and loves,
One God, one law, one element,
And one far-off divine event,
To which the whole creation moves.

MAUD.

I.

1.

I HATE the dreadful hollow behind the little wood,
Its lips in the field above are dabbled with blood-red heath,
The red-ribb'd ledges drip with a silent horror of blood,
And Echo there, whatever is ask'd her, answers 'Death.'

2.

For there in the ghastly pit long since a body was found,
His who had given me life — O father! O God! was it well? —
Mangled, and flatten'd, and crush'd, and dinted into the ground:
There yet lies the rock that fell with him when he fell.

3.

Did he fling himself down? who knows? for a vast speculation had fail'd,
And ever he mutter'd and madden'd, and ever wann'd with despair,
And out he walk'd when the wind like a broken worldling wail'd,
And the flying gold of the ruin'd woodlands drove thro' the air.

4.

I remember the time, for the roots of my hair were
stirr'd
By a shuffled step, by a dead weight trail'd, by a
whisper'd fright,
And my pulses closed their gates with a shock on
my heart as I heard
The shrill-edged shriek of a mother divide the
shuddering night.

5.

Villany somewhere! whose? One says, we are
villains all.
Not he: his honest fame should at least by me be
maintain'd:
But that old man, now lord of the broad estate and
the Hall,
Dropt off gorged from a scheme that had left us
flaccid and drain'd.

6.

Why do they prate of the blessings of Peace? we
have made them a curse,
Pickpockets, each hand lusting for all that is not its
own;
And lust of gain, in the spirit of Cain, is it better
or worse
Than the heart of the citizen hissing in war on his
own hearthstone?

7.

But these are the days of advance, the works of
the men of mind,
When who but a fool would have faith in a trades-
man's ware or his word?
Is it peace or war? Civil war, as I think, and that
of a kind
The viler, as underhand, not openly bearing the
sword.

8.

Sooner or later I too may passively take the print
Of the golden age—why not? I have neither hope nor trust;
May make my heart as a millstone, set my face as a flint,
Cheat and be cheated, and die: who knows? we are ashes and dust.

9.

Peace sitting under her olive, and slurring the days gone by,
When the poor are hovell'd and hustled together, each sex, like swine,
When only the ledger lives, and when only not all men lie;
Peace in her vineyard—yes!—but a company forges the wine.

10.

And the vitriol madness flushes up in the ruffian's head,
Till the filthy by-lane rings to the yell of the trampled wife,
While chalk and alum and plaster are sold to the poor for bread,
And the spirit of murder works in the very means of life.

11.

And Sleep must lie down arm'd, for the villanous centre-bits
Grind on the wakeful ear in the hush of the moonless nights,
While another is cheating the sick of a few last gasps, as he sits
To pestle a poison'd poison behind his crimson lights.

12.

When a Mammonite mother kills her babe for a burial fee,
And Timour-Mammon grins on a pile of children's bones,
Is it peace or war? better, war! loud war by land and by sea.
War with a thousand battles, and shaking a hundred thrones.

13.

For I trust if an enemy's fleet came yonder round by the hill,
And the rushing battle-bolt sang from the three-decker out of the foam,
That the smooth-faced snub-nosed rogue would leap from his counter and till,
And strike, if he could, were it but with his cheating yard-wand, home.

14.

What! am I raging alone as my father raged in his mood?
Must *I* too creep to the hollow and dash myself down and die
Rather than hold by the law that I made, nevermore to brood
On a horror of shatter'd limbs and a wretched swindler's lie?

15.

Would there be sorrow for *me?* there was *love* in the passionate shriek,
Love for the silent thing that had made false haste to the grave—
Wrapt in a cloak, as I saw him, and thought he would rise and speak
And rave at the lie and the liar, ah God, as he used to rave.

16.

I am sick of the Hall and the hill, I am sick of the moor and the main.
Why should I stay? can a sweeter chance ever come to me here?
O, having the nerves of motion as well as the nerves of pain,
Were it not wise if I fled from the place and the pit and the fear?

17.

There are workmen up at the Hall: they are coming back from abroad;
The dark old place will be gilt by the touch of a millionnaire:
I have heard, I know not whence, of the singular beauty of Maud;
I play'd with the girl when a child; she promised then to be fair.

18.

Maud with her venturous climbings and tumbles and childish escapes,
Maud the delight of the village, the ringing joy of the Hall,
Maud with her sweet purse-mouth when my father dangled the grapes,
Maud the beloved of my mother, the moon-faced darling of all,—

19.

What is she now? My dreams are bad. She may bring me a curse.
No, there is fatter game on the mōor; she will let me alone.
Thanks, for the fiend best knows whether woman or man be the worse.
I will bury myself in my books, and the Devil may pipe to his own.

II.

Long have I sigh'd for a calm: God grant I may
find it at last!
It will never be broken by Maud, she has neither
savor nor salt,
But a cold and clear-cut face, as I found when her
carriage past,
Perfectly beautiful: let it be granted her: where
is the fault?
All that I saw (for her eyes were downcast, not to
be seen)
Faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null,
Dead perfection, no more; nothing more, if it had
not been
For a chance of travel, a paleness, an hour's defect
of the rose,
Or an underlip, you may call it a little too ripe,
too full,
Or the least little delicate aquiline curve in a
sensitive nose,
From which I escaped heart-free, with the least
little touch of spleen.

III.

Cold and clear-cut face, why come you so cruelly
meek,
Breaking a slumber in which all spleenful folly was
drown'd,
Pale with the golden beam of an eyelash dead on
the cheek,
Passionless, pale, cold face, star-sweet on a gloom
profound;
Womanlike, taking revenge too deep for a tran-
sient wrong
Done but in thought to your beauty, and ever as
pale as before
Growing and fading and growing upon me without
a sound,

Luminous, gemlike, ghostlike, deathlike, half the night long
Growing and fading and growing, till I could bear it no more,
But arose, and all by myself in my own dark garden ground,
Listening now to the tide in its broad-flung shipwrecking roar,
Now to the scream of a madden'd beach dragg'd down by the wave,
Walk'd in a wintry wind by a ghastly glimmer, and found
The shining daffodil dead, and Orion low in his grave.

IV.

1.

A MILLION emeralds break from the ruby-budded lime
In the little grove where I sit—ah, wherefore cannot I be
Like things of the season gay, like the bountiful season bland,
When the far-off sail is blown by the breeze of a softer clime,
Half-lost in the liquid azure bloom of a crescent of sea,
The silent sapphire-spangled marriage ring of the land?

2.

Below me, there, is the village, and looks how quiet and small!
And yet bubbles o'er like a city, with gossip, scandal, and spite;
And Jack on his ale-house bench has as many lies as a Czar;
And here on the landward side, by a red rock, glimmers the Hall;

And up in the high Hall-garden I see her pass like
a light;
But sorrow seize me if ever that light be my leading
star!

3.

When have I bow'd to her father, the wrinkled head
of the race?
I met her to-day with her brother, but not to her
brother I bow'd;
I bow'd to his lady-sister as she rode by on the
moor;
But the fire of a foolish pride flash'd over her
beautiful face.
O child, you wrong your beauty, believe it, in being
so proud;
Your father has wealth well-gotten, and I am
nameless and poor.

4.

I keep but a man and a maid, ever ready to slander
and steal;
I know it, and smile a hard-set smile, like a stoic, or
like
A wiser epicurean, and let the world have its
way:
For nature is one with rapine, a harm no preacher
can heal;
The Mayfly is torn by the swallow, the sparrow
spear'd by the shrike,
And the whole little wood where I sit is a world of
plunder and prey.

5.

We are puppets, Man in his pride, and Beauty fair
in her flower;
Do we move ourselves, or are moved by an unseen
hand at a game

That pushes us off from the board, and others ever
succeed?
Ah yet, we cannot be kind to each other here for
an hour;
We whisper, and hint, and chuckle, and grin at a
brother's shame;
However we brave it out, we men are a little
breed.

6.

A monstrous eft was of old the Lord and Master of
Earth,
For him did his high sun flame, and his river
billowing ran,
And he felt himself in his force to be Nature's
crowning race.
As nine months go to the shaping an infant ripe for
his birth,
So many a million of ages have gone to the making
of man:
He now is first, but is he the last? is he not too
base?

7.

The man of science himself is fonder of glory, and
vain,
An eye well-practised in nature, a spirit bounded
and poor;
The passionate heart of the poet is whirl'd into folly
and vice.
I would not marvel at either, but keep a temperate
brain;
For not to desire or admire, if a man could learn it,
were more
Than to walk all day like the sultan of old in a
garden of spice.

8.

For the drift of the Maker is dark, an Isis hid by the veil.
Who knows the ways of the world, how God will bring them about?
Our planet is one, the suns are many, the world is wide.
Shall I weep if a Poland fall? shall I shriek if a Hungary fail?
Or an infant civilization be ruled with rod or with knout?
I have not made the world, and He that made it will guide.

9.

Be mine a philosopher's life in the quiet woodland ways,
Where if I cannot be gay let a passionless peace be my lot,
Far off from the clamor of liars belied in the hubbub of lies;
From the long-neck'd geese of the world that are ever hissing dispraise
Because their natures are little, and, whether he heed it or not,
Where each man walks with his head in a cloud of poisonous flies.

10.

And most of all would I flee from the cruel madness of love,
The honey of poison-flowers and all the measureless ill.
Ah Maud, you milk-white fawn, you are all unmeet for a wife.
Your mother is mute in her grave as her image in marble above;

Your father is ever in London, you wander about
at your will;
You have but fed on the roses, and lain in the lilies
of life.

V.

1.

A VOICE by the cedar tree,
In the meadow under the Hall!
She is singing an air that is known to me,
A passionate ballad gallant and gay,
A martial song like a trumpet's call!
Singing alone in the morning of life,
In the happy morning of life and of May,
Singing of men that in battle array,
Ready in heart and ready in hand,
March with banner and bugle and fife
To the death, for their native land.

2.

Maud with her exquisite face,
And wild voice pealing up to the sunny sky,
And feet like sunny gems on an English green,
Maud in the light of her youth and her grace,
Singing of Death, and of Honor that cannot die,
Till I well could weep for a time so sordid and mean
And myself so languid and base.

3.

Silence, beautiful voice!
Be still, for you only trouble the mind
With a joy in which I cannot rejoice,
A glory I shall not find.
Still! I will hear you no more,
For your sweetness hardly leaves me a choice
But to move to the meadow and fall before
Her feet on the meadow grass, and adore,
Not her, who is neither courtly nor kind,
Not her, not her, but a voice.

VI.

1.

MORNING arises stormy and pale,
No sun, but a wannish glare
In fold upon fold of hueless cloud,
And the budded peaks of the wood are bow'd
Caught and cuff'd by the gale:
I had fancied it would be fair.

2.

Whom but Maud should I meet
Last night, when the sunset burn'd
On the blossom'd gable-ends
At the head of the village street,
Whom but Maud should I meet?
And she touch'd my hand with a smile so sweet
She made me divine amends
For a courtesy not return'd.

3.

And thus a delicate spark
Of glowing and growing light
Thro' the livelong hours of the dark
Kept itself warm in the heart of my dreams,
Ready to burst in a color'd flame;
Till at last when the morning came
In a cloud, it faded, and seems
But an ashen-gray delight.

4.

What if with her sunny hair,
And smile as sunny as cold,
She meant to weave me a snare
Of some coquettish deceit,
Cleopatra-like as of old
To entangle me when we met
To have her lion roll in a silken net
And fawn at a victor's feet.

5.

Ah, what shall I be at fifty
Should Nature keep me alive,
If I find the world so bitter
When I am but twenty-five ?
Yet, if she were not a cheat,
If Maud were all that she seem'd,
And her smile were all that I dream'd,
Then the world were not so bitter
But a smile could make it sweet.

6.

What if tho' her eye seem'd full
Of a kind intent to me,
What if that dandy-despot, he,
That jewell'd mass of millinery,
That oil'd and curl'd Assyrian Bull
Smelling of musk and of insolence,
Her brother, from whom I keep aloof,
Who wants the finer politic sense
To mask, tho' but in his own behoof,
With a glassy smile his brutal scorn—
What if he had told her yester-morn
How prettily for his own sweet sake
A face of tenderness might be feign'd,
And a moist mirage in desert eyes,
That so, when the rotten hustings shake
In another month to his brazen lies,
A wretched vote may be gain'd.

7.

For a raven ever croaks, at my side,
Keep watch and ward, keep watch and ward,
Or thou wilt prove their tool.
Yea too, myself from myself I guard,
For often a man's own angry pride
Is cap and bells for a fool.

8.

Perhaps the smile and tender tone
Came out of her pitying womanhood,
For am I not, am I not, here alone.
So many a summer since she died,
My mother, who was so gentle and good?
Living alone in an empty house,
Here half-hid in the gleaming wood,
Where I hear the dead at midday moan,
And the shrieking rush of the wainscot mouse,
And my own sad name in corners cried,
When the shiver of dancing leaves is thrown
About its echoing chambers wide,
Till a morbid hate and horror have grown
Of a world in which I have hardly mixt,
And a morbid eating lichen fixt
On a heart half-turn'd to stone.

9.

O heart of stone, are you flesh, and caught
By that you swore to withstand?
For what was it else within me wrought
But, I fear, the new strong wine of love,
That made my tongue so stammer and trip
When I saw the treasured splendor, her hand,
Come sliding out of her sacred glove,
And the sunlight broke from her lip?

10.

I have play'd with her when a child;
She remembers it now we meet.
Ah well, well, well, I may be beguiled
By some coquettish deceit.
Yet, if she were not a cheat,
If Maud were all that she seem'd,
And her smile had all that I dream'd,
Then the world were not so bitter
But a smile could make it sweet.

VII.

1.

Did I hear it half in a doze
Long since, I know not where?
Did I dream it an hour ago,
When asleep in this arm-chair?

2.

Men were drinking together,
Drinking and talking of me;
'Well, if it prove a girl, the boy
Will have plenty; so let it be.'

3.

Is it an echo of something
Read with a boy's delight,
Viziers nodding together
In some Arabian night?

4.

Strange, that I hear two men,
Somewhere, talking of me;
'Well, if it prove a girl, my boy
Will have plenty: so let it be.'

VIII.

She came to the village church,
And sat by a pillar alone;
An angel watching an urn
Wept over her, carved in stone;
And once, but once, she lifted her eyes,
And suddenly, sweetly, strangely blush'd
To find they were met by my own;
And suddenly, sweetly, my heart beat stronger
And thicker, until I heard no longer
The snowy-banded, dilettante,

Delicate-handed priest intone;
And thought, is it pride, and mused and sigh'd
'No surely, now it cannot be pride.'

IX.

I WAS walking a mile,
More than a mile from the shore,
The sun look'd out with a smile,
Betwixt the cloud and the moor,
And riding at set of day
Over the dark moor land,
Rapidly riding far away,
She waved to me with her hand.
There were two at her side,
Something flash'd in the sun,
Down by the hill I saw them ride,
In a moment they were gone:
Like a sudden spark
Struck vainly in the night,
And back returns the dark
With no more hope of light.

X.

1.

SICK, am I sick of a jealous dread?
Was not one of the two at her side
This new-made lord, whose splendor plucks
The slavish hat from the villager's head?
Whose old grandfather has lately died,
Gone to a blacker pit, for whom
Grimy nakedness dragging his trucks
And laying his trams in a poison'd gloom
Wrought, till he crept from a gutted mine
Master of half a servile shire,
And left his coal all turn'd into gold
To a grandson, first of his noble line,
Rich in the grace all women desire,
Strong in the power that all men adore,

And simper and set their voices lower,
And soften as if to a girl, and hold
Awe-stricken breaths at a work divine,
Seeing his gewgaw castle shine,
New as his title, built last year,
There amid perky larches and pine,
And over the sullen-purple moor
(Look at it) pricking a cockney ear.

2.

What, has he found my jewel out?
For one of the two that rode at her side
Bound for the Hall, I am sure was he:
Bound for the Hall, and I think for a bride.
Blithe would her brother's acceptance be.
Maud could be gracious too, no doubt,
To a lord, a captain, a padded shape,
A bought commission, a waxen face,
A rabbit mouth that is ever agape—
Bought? what is it he cannot buy?
And therefore splenetic, personal, base,
A wounded thing with a rancorous cry,
At war with myself and a wretched race,
Sick, sick to the heart of life, am I.

3.

Last week came one to the county town,
To preach our poor little army down,
And play the game of the despot kings,
Tho' the state has done it and thrice as well:
This broad-brimm'd hawker of holy things,
Whose ear is stuff'd with his cotton, and rings
Even in dreams to the chink of his pence,
This huckster put down war! can he tell
Whether war be a cause or a consequence?
Put down the passions that make earth Hell!
Down with ambition, avarice, pride,
Jealousy, down! cut off from the mind

The bitter springs of anger and fear;
Down too, down at your own fireside,
With the evil tongue and the evil ear,
For each is at war with mankind.

4.

I wish I could hear again
The chivalrous battle-song
That she warbled alone in her joy!
I might persuade myself then
She would not do herself this great wrong
To take a wanton dissolute boy
For a man and leader of men.

5.

Ah God, for a man with heart, head, hand,
Like some of the simple great ones gone
Forever and ever by,
One still strong man in a blatant land,
Whatever they call him, what care I,
Aristocrat, democrat, autocrat—one
Who can rule and dare not lie.

6.

And ah for a man to arise in me,
That the man I am may cease to be!

XI.

1.

O LET the solid ground
Not fail beneath my feet
Before my life has found
What some have found so sweet,
Then let come what come may,
What matter if I go mad,
I shall have had my day.

2.

Let the sweet heavens endure,
Not close and darken above me

Before I am quite quite sure
That there is one to love me;
Then let come what come may
To a life that has been so sad,
I shall have had my day.

XII.

1.

Birds in the high Hall-garden
When twilight was falling,
Maud, Maud, Maud, Maud,
They were crying and calling

2.

Where was Maud? in our wood;
And I, who else, was with her,
Gathering woodland lilies,
Myriads blow together.

3.

Birds in our wood sang
Ringing thro' the valleys,
Maud is here, here, here
In among the lilies.

4.

I kiss'd her slender hand,
She took the kiss sedately;
Maud is not seventeen,
But she is tall and stately.

5.

I to cry out on pride
Who have won her favor!
O Maud were sure of Heaven
If lowliness could save her.

6.

I know the way she went
Home with her maiden posy,
For her feet have touch'd the meadows
And left the daisies rosy.

7.

Birds in the high Hall-garden
Were crying and calling to her,
Where is Maud, Maud, Maud,
One is come to woo her.

8.

Look, a horse at the door,
And little King Charles is snarling,
Go back, my lord, across the moor,
You are not her darling.

XIII.

1.

Scorn'd, to be scorn'd by one that I scorn,
Is that a matter to make me fret?
That a calamity hard to be borne?
Well, he may live to hate me yet.
Fool that I am to be vext with his pride!
I past him, I was crossing his lands;
He stood on the path a little aside;
His face, as I grant, in spite of spite,
Has a broad-blown comeliness, red and white,
And six feet two, as I think, he stands;
But his essences turn'd the live air sick,
And barbarous opulence jewel-thick
Sunn'd itself on his breast and his hands.

2.

Who shall call me ungentle, unfair,
I long'd so heartily then and there

To give him the grasp of fellowship;
But while I past he was humming an air,
Stopt, and then with a riding-whip
Leisurely tapping a glossy boot,
And curving a contumelious lip,
Gorgonised me from head to foot
With a stony British stare.

3.

Why sits he here in his father's chair?
That old man never comes to his place:
Shall I believe him ashamed to be seen?
For only once, in the village street,
Last year, I caught a glimpse of his face,
A gray old wolf and a lean.
Scarcely, now, would I call him a cheat;
For then, perhaps, as a child of deceit,
She might by a true descent be untrue;
And Maud is as true as Maud is sweet:
Tho' I fancy her sweetness only due
To the sweeter blood by the other side;
Her mother has been a thing complete,
However she came to be so allied.
And fair without, faithful within,
Maud to him is nothing akin:
Some peculiar mystic grace
Made her only the child of her mother,
And heap'd the whole inherited sin
On that huge scapegoat of the race,
All, all upon the brother.

4.

Peace, angry spirit, and let him be!
Has not his sister smiled on me?

XIV.

1.

MAUD has a garden of roses,
And lilies fair on a lawn;
There she walks in her state
And tends upon bed and bower,
And thither I climb'd at dawn
And stood by her garden-gate;
A lion ramps at the top,
He is clasp't by a passion-flower.

2.

Maud's own little oak-room
(Which Maud, like a precious stone
Set in the heart of the carven gloom,
Lights with herself, when alone
She sits by her music and books,
And her brother lingers late
With a roystering company) looks
Upon Maud's own garden gate:
And I thought as I stood, if a hand, as white
As ocean-foam in the moon, were laid
On the hasp of the window, and my Delight
Had a sudden desire, like a glorious ghost, to glide
Like a beam of the seventh Heaven, down to my side,
There were but a step to be made.

3.

The fancy flatter'd my mind,
And again seem'd overbold;
Now I thought that she cared for me,
Now I thought she was kind
Only because she was cold.

4.

I heard no sound where I stood
But the rivulet on from the lawn
Running down to my own dark wood;

Or the voice of the long sea-wave as it swell'd
Now and then in the dim-gray dawn;
But I look'd, and round, all round the house I beheld
The death-white curtain drawn;
Felt a horror over me creep,
Prickle my skin and catch my breath,
Knew that the death-white curtain meant but sleep,
Yet I shudder'd and thought like a fool of the sleep of death.

XV.

So dark a mind within me dwells,
And I make myself such evil cheer,
That if I be dear to some one else,
Then some one else may have much to fear;
But if I be dear to some one else,
Then I should be to myself more dear.
Shall I not take care of all that I think,
Yea, ev'n of wretched meat and drink,
If I be dear,
If I be dear to some one else.

XVI.

1.

This lump of earth has left his estate
The lighter by the loss of his weight;
And so that he find what he went to seek,
And fulsome Pleasure clog him, and drown
His heart in the gross mud-honey of town,
He may stay for a year who has gone for a week:
But this is the day when I must speak,
And I see my Oread coming down,
O this is the day!
O beautiful creature, what am I
That I dare to look her way;
Think I may hold dominion sweet,
Lord of the pulse that is lord of her breast,

And dream of her beauty with tender dread,
From the delicate Arab arch of her feet
To the grace that, bright and light as the crest
Of a peacock, sits on her shining head,
And she knows it not: O, if she knew it,
To know her beauty might half undo it.
I know it the one bright thing to save
My yet young life in the wilds of Time,
Perhaps from madness, perhaps from crime,
Perhaps from a selfish grave.

2.

What, if she be fasten'd to this fool lord,
Dare I bid her abide by her word?
Should I love her so well if she
Had given her word to a thing so low?
Shall I love her as well if she
Can break her word were it even for me?
I trust that it is not so.

3.

Catch not my breath, O clamorous heart,
Let not my tongue be a thrall to my eye,
For I must tell her before we part,
I must tell her or die.

XVII.

Go not, happy day,
From the shining fields,
Go not, happy day,
Till the maiden yields.
Rosy is the West,
Rosy is the South,
Roses are her cheeks,
And a rose her mouth.
When the happy Yes
Falters from her lips,
Pass and blush the news
O'er the blowing ships.

Over blowing seas,
Over seas at rest,
Pass the happy news,
Blush it thro' the West;
Till the red man dance
By his red cedar tree,
And the red man's babe
Leap, beyond the sea.
Blush from West to East,
Blush from East to West,
Till the West is East,
Blush it thro' the West.
Rosy is the West,
Rosy is the South,
Roses are her cheeks,
And a rose her mouth.

XVIII.

1.

I HAVE led her home, my love, my only friend.
There is none like her, none.
And never yet so warmly ran my blood
And sweetly, on and on
Calming itself to the long-wish'd-for end,
Full to the banks, close on the promised good.

2.

None like her, none.
Just now the dry-tongued laurels' pattering talk
Seem'd her light foot along the garden walk,
And shook my heart to think she comes once more;
But even then I heard her close the door,
The gates of Heaven are closed, and she is gone.

3.

There is none like her, none.
Nor will be when our summers have deceased.

O, art thou sighing for Lebanon
In the long breeze that streams to thy delicious East,
Sighing for Lebanon,
Dark cedar, tho' thy limbs have here increased,
Upon a pastoral slope as fair,
And looking to the South, and fed
With honey'd rain and delicate air,
And haunted by the starry head
Of her whose gentle will has changed my fate,
And made my life a perfumed altar-flame;
And over whom thy darkness must have spread
With such delight as theirs of old, thy great
Forefathers of the thornless garden, there
Shadowing the snow-limb'd Eve from whom she came.

4.

Here will I lie, while these long branches sway,
And you fair stars that crown a happy day
Go in and out as if at merry play,
Who am no more so all forlorn,
As when it seem'd far better to be born
To labor and the mattock-harden'd hand,
Than nursed at ease and brought to understand
A sad astrology, the boundless plan
That makes you tyrants in your iron skies,
Innumerable, pitiless, passionless eyes,
Cold fires, yet with power to burn and brand
His nothingness into man.

5.

But now shine on, and what care I,
Who in this stormy gulf have found a pearl
The counter-charm of space and hollow sky,
And do accept my madness, and would die
To save from some slight shame one simple girl.

6.

Would die; for sullen-seeming Death may give
More life to Love than is or ever was

In our low world, where yet 'tis sweet to live.
Let no one ask me how it came to pass;
It seems that I am happy, that to me
A livelier emerald twinkles in the grass,
A purer sapphire melts into the sea.

7.

Not die; but live a life of truest breath,
And teach true life to fight with mortal wrongs.
O, why should Love, like men in drinking-songs,
Spice his fair banquet with the dust of death?
Make answer, Maud my bliss,
Maud made my Maud by that long lover's kiss,
Life of my life, wilt thou not answer this?
"The dusky strand of Death inwoven here
With dear Love's tie, makes Love himself more dear."

8.

Is that enchanted moan only the swell
Of the long waves that roll in yonder bay?
And hark the clock within, the silver knell
Of twelve sweet hours that past in bridal white,
And died to live, long as my pulses play;
But now by this my love has closed her sight
And given false death her hand, and stol'n away
To dreamful wastes where footless fancies dwell
Among the fragments of the golden day.
May nothing there her maiden grace affright!
Dear heart, I feel with thee the drowsy spell.
My bride to be, my evermore delight,
My own heart's heart and ownest own, farewell.
It is but for a little space I go:
And ye meanwhile far over moor and fell
Beat to the noiseless music of the night!
Has our whole earth gone nearer to the glow
Of your soft splendors that you look so bright?
I have climb'd nearer out of lonely Hell.
Beat, happy stars, timing with things below,
Beat with my heart more blest than heart can tell,

Blest, but for some dark under-current woe
That seems to draw—but it shall not be so:
Let all be well, be well.

XIX.

1.

Her brother is coming back to-night,
Breaking up my dream of delight.

2.

My dream? do I dream of bliss?
I have walk'd awake with Truth.
O when did a morning shine
So rich in atonement as this
For my dark-dawning youth,
Darken'd watching a mother decline
And that dead man at her heart and mine:
For who was left to watch her but I?
Yet so did I let my freshness die.

3.

I trust that I did not talk
To gentle Maud in our walk
(For often in lonely wanderings
I have cursed him even to lifeless things)
But I trust that I did not talk,
Not touch on her father's sin:
I am sure I did but speak
Of my mother's faded cheek
When it slowly grew so thin,
That I felt she was slowly dying
Vext with lawyers and harass'd with debt:
For how often I caught her with eyes all wet,
Shaking her head at her son and sighing
A world of trouble within!

4.

And Maud too, Maud was moved
To speak of the mother she loved
As one scarce less forlorn,
Dying abroad and it seems apart
From him who had ceased to share her heart,
And ever mourning over the feud,
The household Fury sprinkled with blood
By which our houses are torn:
How strange was what she said,
When only Maud and the brother
Hung over her dying bed—
That Maud's dark father and mine
Had bound us one to the other,
Betrothed us over their wine,
On the day when Maud was born;
Seal'd her mine from her first sweet breath.
Mine, mine by a right, from birth till death,
Mine, mine—our fathers have sworn.

5.

But the true blood spilt had in it a heat
To dissolve the precious seal on a bond,
That, if left uncancell'd, had been so sweet:
And none of us thought of a something beyond,
A desire that awoke in the heart of the child,
As it were a duty done to the tomb,
To be friends for her sake, to be reconciled;
And I was cursing them and my doom,
And letting a dangerous thought run wild
While often abroad in the fragrant gloom
Of foreign churches—I see her there,
Bright English lily, breathing a prayer
To be friends, to be reconciled!

6.

But then what a flint is he!
Abroad, at Florence, at Rome,
I find whenever she touch'd on me
This brother had laugh'd her down,
And at last, when each came home,
He had darken'd into a frown,
Chid her, and forbid her to speak
To me, her friend of the years before;
And this was what had redden'd her cheek
When I bow'd to her on the moor.

7.

Yet Maud, altho' not blind
To the faults of his heart and mind,
I see she cannot but love him,
And says he is rough but kind,
And wishes me to approve him,
And tells me, when she lay
Sick once, with a fear of worse,
That he left his wine and horses and play,
Sat with her, read to her, night and day,
And tended her like a nurse.

8.

Kind? but the deathbed desire
Spurn'd by this heir of the liar—
Rough but kind? yet I know
He has plotted against me in this,
That he plots against me still.
Kind to Maud? that were not amiss.
Well, rough but kind; why, let it be so:
For shall not Maud have her will?

9.

For, Maud, so tender and true,
As long as my life endures
I feel I shall owe you a debt,
That I never can hope to pay;
And if ever I should forget
That I owe this debt to you
And for your sweet sake to yours;
O then, what then shall I say?—
If ever I *should* forget,
May God make me more wretched
Than ever I have been yet!

10.

So now I have sworn to bury
All this dead body of hate,
I feel so free and so clear
By the loss of that dead weight,
That I should grow light-headed, I fear,
Fantastically merry;
But that her brother comes, like a blight
On my fresh hope, to the Hall to-night.

XX.

1.

Strange, that I felt so gay,
Strange, that I tried to-day
To beguile her melancholy;
The Sultan, as we name him,—
She did not wish to blame him—
But he vext her and perplext her
With his worldly talk and folly:
Was it gentle to reprove her
For stealing out of view
From a little lazy lover
Who but claims her as his due?

Or for chilling his caresses
By the coldness of her manners,
Nay, the plainness of her dresses?
Now I know her but in two,
Nor can pronounce upon it
If one should ask me whether
The habit, hat, and feather,
Or the frock and gypsy bonnet
Be the neater and completer;
For nothing can be sweeter
Than maiden Maud in either.

2.

But to-morrow, if we live,
Our ponderous squire will give
A grand political dinner
To half the squirelings near;
And Maud will wear her jewels,
And the bird of prey will hover,
And the titmouse hope to win her
With his chirrup at her ear.

3.

A grand political dinner
To the men of many acres,
A gathering of the Tory,
A dinner and then a dance
For the maids and marriage-makers,
And every eye but mine will glance
At Maud in all her glory.

4.

For I am not invited,
But, with the Sultan's pardon,
I am all as well delighted,
For I know her own rose-garden,
And mean to linger in it
Till the dancing will be over;
And then, O then, come out to me

For a minute, but for a minute,
Come out to your own true lover,
That your true lover may see
Your glory also, and render
All homage to his own darling,
Queen Maud in all her splendor.

XXI.

Rivulet crossing my ground,
And bringing me down from the Hall
This garden-rose that I found,
Forgetful of Maud and me,
And lost in trouble and moving round
Here at the head of a tinkling fall
And trying to pass to the sea;
O Rivulet, born at the Hall,
My Maud has sent it by thee
(If I read her sweet will right)
On a blushing mission to me,
Saying in odor and color, 'Ah, be
Among the roses to-night.'

XXII.

1.

Come into the garden, Maud,
For the black bat, night, has flown,
Come into the garden, Maud,
I am here at the gate alone;
And the woodbine spices are wafted abroad,
And the musk of the roses blown.

2.

For a breeze of morning moves,
And the planet of Love is on high,
Beginning to faint in the light that she loves

On a bed of daffodil sky,
To faint in the light of the sun she loves,
To faint in his light, and to die.

3.

All night have the roses heard
The flute, violin, bassoon;
All night has the casement jessamine stirr'd
To the dancers dancing in tune:
Till a silence fell with the waking bird,
And a hush with the setting moon.

4.

I said to the lily, "There is but one
With whom she has heart to be gay.
When will the dancers leave her alone?
She is weary of dance and play."
Now half to the setting moon are gone,
And half to the rising day;
Low on the sand and loud on the stone
The last wheel echoes away.

5.

I said to the rose, "The brief night goes
In babble and revel and wine.
O young lord-lover, what sighs are those,
For one that will never be thine?
But mine, but mine," so I sware to the rose,
"For ever and ever, mine."

6.

And the soul of the rose went into my blood,
As the music clash'd in the hall;
And long by the garden lake I stood,
For I heard your rivulet fall
From the lake to the meadow and on to the wood,
Our wood, that is dearer than all;

7.

From the meadow your walks have left so sweet
That whenever a March-wind sighs
He sets the jewel-print of your feet
In violets blue as your eyes,
To the woody hollows in which we meet
And the valleys of Paradise.

8.

The slender acacia would not shake
One long milk-bloom on the tree;
The white lake-blossom fell into the lake,
As the pimpernel dozed on the lea;
But the rose was awake all night for your sake,
Knowing your promise to me;
The lilies and roses were all awake,
They sigh'd for the dawn and thee.

9.

Queen rose of the rosebud garden of girls,
Come hither, the dances are done,
In gloss of satin and glimmer of pearls,
Queen lily and rose in one;
Shine out, little head, sunning over with curls,
To the flowers, and be their sun.

10.

There has fallen a splendid tear
From the passion-flower at the gate.
She is coming, my dove, my dear;
She is coming, my life, my fate;
The red rose cries, "She is near, she is near;"
And the white rose weeps, "She is late;"
The larkspur listens, "I hear, I hear;"
And the lily whispers, "I wait."

11.

She is coming, my own, my sweet;
Were it ever so airy a tread,

My heart would hear her and beat,
Were it earth in an earthy bed;
My dust would hear her and beat,
Had I lain for a century dead;
Would start and tremble under her feet,
And blossom in purple and red.

XXIII.

1.

"THE fault was mine, the fault was mine"—
Why am I sitting here so stunn'd and still,
Plucking the harmless wild-flower on the hill?—
It is this guilty hand!—
And there rises ever a passionate cry
From underneath in the darkening land—
What is it that has been done?
O dawn of Eden bright over earth and sky,
The fires of Hell brake out of thy rising sun,
The fires of Hell and of Hate;
For she, sweet soul, had hardly spoken a word,
When her brother ran in his rage to the gate.
He came with the babe-faced lord;
Heap'd on her terms of disgrace,
And while she wept, and I strove to be cool,
He fiercely gave me the lie,
Till I with as fierce an anger spoke,
And he struck me, madman, over the face,
Struck me before the languid fool,
Who was gaping and grinning by:
Struck for himself an evil stroke;
Wrought for his house an irredeemable woe;
For front to front in an hour we stood,
And a million horrible bellowing echoes broke
From the red-ribb'd hollow behind the wood,
And thunder'd up into Heaven the Christless code,
That must have life for a blow.
Ever and ever afresh they seem'd to grow.

Was it he lay there with a fading eye?
"The fault was mine," he whisper'd, "fly!"
Then glided out of the joyous wood
The ghastly Wraith of one that I know;
And there rang on a sudden a passionate cry,
A cry for a brother's blood:
It will ring in my heart and my ears, till I die, till I die.

2.

Is it gone? my pulses beat—
What was it? a lying trick of the brain?
Yet I thought I saw her stand,
A shadow there at my feet,
High over the shadowy land.
It is gone; and the heavens fall in a gentle rain,
When they should burst and drown with deluging storms
The feeble vassals of wine and anger and lust,
The little hearts that know not how to forgive:
Arise, my God, and strike, for we hold Thee just,
Strike dead the whole weak race of venomous worms,
That sting each other here in the dust;
We are not worthy to live.

XXIV.

1.

See what a lovely shell,
Small and pure as a pearl,
Lying close to my foot,
Frail, but a work divine,
Made so fairily well
With delicate spire and whorl,
How exquisitely minute,
A miracle of design!

2.

What is it? a learned man
Could give it a clumsy name.
Let him name it who can,
The beauty would be the same.

3.

The tiny cell is forlorn,
Void of the little living will
That made it stir on the shore.
Did he stand at the diamond door
Of his house in a rainbow frill?
Did he push, when he was uncurl'd,
A golden foot or a fairy horn
Thro' his dim water-world?

4.

Slight, to be crush'd with a tap
Of my finger-nail on the sand,
Small, but a work divine,
Frail, but of force to withstand,
Year upon year, the shock
Of cataract seas that snap
The three-decker's oaken spine
Athwart the ledges of rock,
Here on the Breton strand!

5.

Breton, not Briton; here
Like a shipwreck'd man on a coast
Of ancient fable and fear—
Plagued with a flitting to and fro,
A disease, a hard mechanic ghost
That never came from on high
Nor ever arose from below,
But only moves with the moving eye,
Flying along the land and the main—

Why should it look like Maud?
Am I to be overawed
By what I cannot but know
Is a juggle born of the brain?

6.

Back from the Breton coast,
Sick of a nameless fear,
Back to the dark sea-line
Looking, thinking of all I have lost;
An old song vexes my ear;
But that of Lamech is mine.

7.

For years, a measureless ill,
For years, for ever, to part—
But she, she would love me still;
And as long, O God, as she
Have a grain of love for me,
So long, no doubt, no doubt,
Shall I nurse in my dark heart,
However weary, a spark of will
Not to be trampled out.

8.

Strange, that the mind, when fraught
With a passion so intense
One would think that it well
Might drown all life in the eye,—
That it should, by being so overwrought,
Suddenly strike on a sharper sense
For a shell, or a flower, little things
Which else would have been past by!
And now I remember, I,
When he lay dying there,
I noticed one of his many rings
(For he had many, poor worm) and thought
It is his mother's hair.

9.

Who knows if he be dead?
Whether I need have fled?
Am I guilty of blood?
However this may be,
Comfort her, comfort her, all things good,
While I am over the sea!
Let me and my passionate love go by,
But speak to her all things holy and high,
Whatever happen to me!
Me and my harmful love go by;
But come to her waking, find her asleep,
Powers of the height, Powers of the deep,
And comfort her tho' I die.

XXV.

Courage, poor heart of stone!
I will not ask thee why
Thou canst not understand
That thou art left forever alone:
Courage, poor stupid heart of stone.—
Or if I ask thee why,
Care not thou to reply:
She is but dead, and the time is at hand
When thou shalt more than die.

XXVI.

1.

O that 'twere possible
After long grief and pain
To find the arms of my true love
Round me once again!

2.

When I was wont to meet her
In the silent woody places

By the home that gave me birth,
We stood tranced in long embraces
Mixt with kisses sweeter, sweeter
Than anything on earth.

3.

A shadow flits before me,
Not thou, but like to thee;
Ah Christ, that it were possible
For one short hour to see
The souls we loved, that they might tell us
What and where they be.

4.

It leads me forth at evening,
It lightly winds and steals
In a cold white robe before me,
When all my spirit reels
At the shouts, the leagues of lights,
And the roaring of the wheels.

5.

Half the night I waste in sighs,
Half in dreams I sorrow after
The delight of early skies;
In a wakeful doze I sorrow
For the hand, the lips, the eyes,
For the meeting of the morrow,
The delight of happy laughter,
The delight of low replies.

6.

'Tis a morning pure and sweet,
And a dewy splendor falls
On the little flower that clings
To the turrets and the walls;
'Tis a morning pure and sweet,
And the light and shadow fleet;
She is walking in the meadow,

And the woodland echo rings;
In a moment we shall meet;
She is singing in the meadow,
And the rivulet at her feet
Ripples on in light and shadow
To the ballad that she sings.

7.

Do I hear her sing as of old,
My bird with the shining head,
My own dove with the tender eye?
But there rings on a sudden a passionate cry,
There is some one dying or dead,
And a sullen thunder is roll'd;
For a tumult shakes the city,
And I wake, my dream is fled;
In the shuddering dawn, behold,
Without knowledge, without pity,
By the curtains of my bed
That abiding phantom cold.

8.

Get thee hence, nor come again,
Mix not memory with doubt,
Pass, thou deathlike type of pain,
Pass and cease to move about,
'Tis the blot upon the brain
That *will* show itself without.

9.

Then I rise, the eave-drops fall,
And the yellow vapors choke
The great city sounding wide;
The day comes, a dull red ball
Wrapt in drifts of lurid smoke,
On the misty river-tide.

10.

Thro' the hubbub of the market
I steal, a wasted frame,

It crosses here, it crosses there,
Thro' all that crowd confused and loud,
The shadow still the same;
And on my heavy eyelids
My anguish hangs like shame.

11.

Alas for her that met me,
That heard me softly call,
Came glimmering thro' the laurels
At the quiet evenfall,
In the garden by the turrets
Of the old manorial hall.

12.

Would the happy spirit descend,
From the realms of light and song,
In the chamber or the street,
As she looks among the blest,
Should I fear to greet my friend
Or to say "forgive the wrong,"
Or to ask her, "take me, sweet,
To the regions of thy rest?"

13.

But the broad light glares and beats,
And the shadow flits and fleets
And will not let me be;
And I loathe the squares and streets,
And the faces that one meets,
Hearts with no love for me:
Always I long to creep
Into some still cavern deep,
There to weep, and weep, and weep
My whole soul out to thee.

XXVII.

1.

Dead, long dead,
Long dead!
And my heart is a handful of dust,
And the wheels go over my head,
And my bones are shaken with pain,
For into a shallow grave they are thrust,
Only a yard beneath the street,
And the hoofs of the horses beat, beat,
The hoofs of the horses beat,
Beat into my scalp and my brain,
With never an end to the stream of passing feet,
Driving, hurrying, marrying, burying,
Clamor and rumble, and ringing and clatter,
And here beneath it is all as bad,
For I thought the dead had peace, but it is not so
To have no peace in the grave, is that not sad?
But up and down and to and fro,
Ever about me the dead men go;
And then to hear a dead man chatter
Is enough to drive one mad.

2.

Wretchedest age, since Time began
They cannot even bury a man;
And tho' we paid our tithes in the days that are gone,
Not a bell was rung, not a prayer was read;
It is that which makes us loud in the world of the dead;
There is none that does his work, not one;
A touch of their office might have sufficed,
But the churchmen fain would kill their church,
As the churches have kill'd their Christ.

3.

See, there is one of us sobbing,
No limit to his distress;
And another, a lord of all things, praying
To his own great self, as I guess;
And another, a statesman there, betraying
His party-secret, fool, to the press;
And yonder a vile physician, blabbing
The case of his patient—all for what?
To tickle the maggot born in an empty head,
And wheedle a world that loves him not,
For it is but a world of the dead.

4.

Nothing but idiot gabble!
For the prophecy given of old
And then not understood,
Has come to pass as foretold;
Not let any man think for the public good,
But babble, merely for babble.
For I never whisper'd a private affair
Within the hearing of cat or mouse,
No, not to myself in the closet alone,
But I heard it shouted at once from the top of the house;
Everything came to be known:
Who told *him* we were there?

5.

Not that gray old wolf, for he came not back
From the wilderness, full of wolves, where he used to lie;
He has gather'd the bones for his o'ergrown whelp to crack;
Crack them now for yourself, and howl, and die.

6.

Prophet, curse me the blabbing lip,
And curse me the British vermin, the rat;

I know not whether he came in the Hanover ship,
But I know that he lies and listens mute
In an ancient mansion's crannies and holes:
Arsenic, Arsenic, sure, would do it,
Except that now we poison our babes, poor souls!
It is all used up for that.

7.

Tell him now: she is standing here at my head:
Not beautiful now, not even kind;
He may take her now; for she never speaks her mind,
But is ever the one thing silent here.
She is not of us, as I divine;
She comes from another stiller world of the dead,
Stiller, not fairer than mine.

8.

But I know where a garden grows,
Fairer than aught in the world beside,
All made up of the lily and rose
That blow by night, when the season is good,
To the sound of dancing music and flutes:
It is only flowers, they had no fruits,
And I almost fear they are not roses, but blood;
For the keeper was one, so full of pride,
He linkt a dead man there to a spectral bride;
For he, if he had not been a Sultan of brutes,
Would he have that hole in his side?

9.

But what will the old man say?
He laid a cruel snare in a pit
To catch a friend of mine one stormy day;
Yet now I could even weep to think of it;
For what will the old man say
When he comes to the second corpse in the pit?

10.

Friend, to be struck by the public foe,
Then to strike him and lay him low,
That were a public merit, far,
Whatever the Quaker holds, from sin,
But the red life spilt for a private blow—
I swear to you, lawful and lawless war
Are scarcely even akin.

11.

O me, why have they not buried me deep enough?
Is it kind to have made me a grave so rough,
Me, that was never a quiet sleeper?
Maybe still I am but half dead;
Then I cannot be wholly dumb;
I will cry to the steps above my head,
And somebody, surely, some kind heart will come
To bury me, bury me
Deeper, ever so little deeper.

XXVIII.

1.

My life has crept so long on a broken wing
Thro' cells of madness, haunts of horror and fear,
That I come to be grateful at last for a little thing:
My mood is changed, for it fell at a time of year
When the face of night is fair on the dewy downs,
And the shining daffodil dies, and the Charioteer
And starry Gemini hang like glorious crowns
Over Orion's grave low down in the west,
That like a silent lightning under the stars
She seem'd to divide in a dream from a band of the blest,
And spoke of a hope for the world in the coming wars—
"And in that hope, dear soul, let trouble have rest,
Knowing I tarry for thee," and pointed to Mars
As he glow'd like a ruddy shield on the Lion's breast.

2.

And it was but a dream, yet it yielded a dear
delight
To have look'd, tho' but in a dream, upon eyes so
fair,
That had been in a weary world my one thing
bright;
And it was but a dream, yet it lighten'd my despair
When I thought that a war would arise in defence
of the right,
That an iron tyranny now should bend or cease,
The glory of manhood stand on his ancient height,
Nor Britain's one sole God be the millionnaire:
No more shall commerce be all in all, and Peace
Pipe on her pastoral hillock a languid note,
And watch her harvest ripen, her herd increase,
Nor the cannon-bullet rust on a slothful shore,
And the cobweb woven across the cannon's throat,
Shall shake its threaded tears in the wind no more.

3.

And as months ran on and rumor of battle grew,
"It is time, it is time, O passionate heart," said I
(For I cleaved to a cause that I felt to be pure and
true,)
"It is time, O passionate heart and morbid eye,
That old hysterical mock-disease should die."
And I stood on a giant deck and mix'd my breath
With a loyal people shouting a battle cry,
Till I saw the dreary phantom arise and fly
Far into the North, and battle, and seas of death.

4.

Let it go or stay, so I wake to the higher aims
Of a land that has lost for a little her lust of gold,
And love of a peace that was full of wrongs and
shames,
Horrible, hateful, monstrous, not to be told;

And hail once more to the banner of battle unroll'd!
Tho' many a light shall darken, and many shall weep
For those that are crush'd in the clash of jarring claims,
Yet God's just wrath shall be wreak'd on a giant liar;
And many a darkness into the light shall leap,
And shine in the sudden making of splendid names
And noble thought be freer under the sun,
And the heart of a people beat with one desire;
For the peace that I deemed no peace is over and done,
And now by the side of the Black and the Baltic deep,
And deathful-grinning mouths of the fortress, flames
The blood-red blossom of war with a heart of fire.

5.

Let it flame or fade, and the war roll down like a wind,
We have proved we have hearts in a cause, we are noble still,
And myself have awaked, as it seems, to the better mind;
It is better to fight for the good, than to rail at the ill;
I have felt with my native land, I am one with my kind,
I embrace the purpose of God, and the doom assign'd.

THE BROOK;

AN IDYL.

"HERE, by this brook, we parted; I to the East
And he for Italy—too late—too late:
One whom the strong sons of the world despise;
For lucky rhymes to him were scrip and share,
And mellow metres more than cent for cent;
Nor could he understand how money breeds,
Thought it a dead thing; yet himself could make
The thing that is not as the thing that is.
O had he lived! In our school-books we say,
Of those that held their heads above the crowd,
They flourish'd then or then; but life in him
Could scarce be said to flourish, only touch'd
On such a time as goes before the leaf,
When all the wood stands in a mist of green,
And nothing perfect: yet the brook he loved,
For which, in branding summers of Bengal,
Or ev'n the sweet half-English Neilgherry air,
I panted, seems, as I re-listen to it,
Prattling the primrose fancies of the boy,
To me that loved him; for 'O brook,' he says,
'O babbling brook,' says Edmund in his rhyme,
'Whence come you?' and the brook, why not? replies.

I come from haunts of coot and hern,
I make a sudden sally
And sparkle out among the fern,
To bicker down a valley.

By thirty hills I hurry down,
Or slip between the ridges,
By twenty thorps, a little town,
And half a hundred bridges.

Till last by Philip's farm I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on forever.

"Poor lad, he died at Florence, quite worn out,
Travelling to Naples. There is Darnley bridge,
It has more ivy; there the river; and there
Stands Philip's farm where brook and river meet.

I chatter over stony ways,
In little sharps and trebles,
I bubble into eddying bays,
I babble on the pebbles.

With many a curve my banks I fret
By many a field and fallow,
And many a fairy foreland set
With willow-weed and mallow.

I chatter, chatter, as I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on forever.

"But Philip chatter'd more than brook or bird;
Old Philip; all about the fields you caught
His weary daylong chirping, like the dry
High-elbow'd grigs that leap in summer grass.

I wind about, and in and out,
With here a blossom sailing,
And here and there a lusty trout,
And here and there a grayling,

And here and there a foamy flake
Upon me, as I travel,
With many a silvery waterbreak
Above the golden gravel,

And draw them all along, and flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on forever.

"O darling Katie Willows, his one child!
A maiden of our century, yet most meek;
A daughter of our meadows, yet not coarse;
Straight, but as lissome as a hazel wand;
Her eyes a bashful azure, and her hair
In gloss and hue the chestnut, when the shell
Divides threefold to show the fruit within.

"Sweet Katie, once I did her a good turn,
Her and her far-off cousin and betrothed,
James Willows, of one name and heart with her.
For here I came, twenty years back—the week
Before I parted with poor Edmund; crost
By that old bridge which, half in ruins then,
Still makes a hoary eyebrow for the gleam
Beyond it, where the waters marry—crost,
Whistling a random bar of Bonny Doon,
And push'd at Philip's garden-gate. The gate,
Half-parted from a weak and scolding hinge,
Stuck; and he clamor'd from a casement, "run,"
To Katie somewhere in the walks below,
"Run, Katie!" Katie never ran: she moved
To meet me, winding under woodbine bowers,
A little flutter'd, with her eyelids down,
Fresh apple-blossom, blushing for a boon.

"What was it? less of sentiment than sense
Had Katie; not illiterate; neither one
Who dabbling in the fount of fictive tears,
And nursed by mealy-mouth'd philanthropies,
Divorce the Feeling from her mate the Deed.

"She told me. She and James had quarrell'd. Why?
What cause of quarrel? None, she said, no cause;
James had no cause: but when I prest the cause,
I learnt that James had flickering jealousies
Which anger'd her. Who anger'd James? I said
But Katie snatch'd her eyes at once from mine,
And sketching with her slender pointed foot

Some figure like a wizard's pentagram
On garden gravel, let my query pass
Unclaim'd, in flushing silence, till I ask'd
If James were coming. 'Coming every day,'
She answered, 'ever longing to explain,
But evermore her father came across
With some long-winded tale, and broke him short;
And James departed vext with him and her.'
How could I help her? 'Would I—was it wrong?'
(Claspt hands and that petitionary grace
Of sweet seventeen subdued me ere she spoke)
'O would I take her father for one hour,
For one half-hour, and let him talk to me!'
And even while she spoke, I saw where James
Made toward us, like a wader in the surf,
Beyond the brook, waist-deep in meadow-sweet.

"O Katie, what I suffer'd for your sake!
For in I went, and call'd old Philip out
To show the farm: full willingly he rose:
He led me thro' the short sweet-smelling lanes
Of his wheat-suburb, babbling as he went.
He praised his land, his horses, his machines;
He praised his ploughs, his cows, his hogs, his dogs;
He praised his hens, his geese, his guinea-hens;
His pigeons, who in session on their roofs
Approved him, bowing at their own deserts:
Then from the plaintive mother's teat he took
Her blind and shuddering puppies, naming each,
And naming those, his friends, for whom they were:
Then crost the common into Darnley chase
To show Sir Arthur's deer. In copse and fern
Twinkled the innumerable ear and tail.
Then, seated on a serpent-rooted beech,
He pointed out a pasturing colt, and said:
'That was the four-year-old I sold the Squire.'
And there he told a long long-winded tale

Of how the Squire had seen the colt at grass,
And how it was the thing his daughter wish'd,
And how he sent the bailiff to the farm
To learn the price, and what the price he ask'd,
And how the bailiff swore that he was mad,
But he stood firm; and so the matter hung;
He gave them line: and five days after that
He met the bailiff at the Golden Fleece,
Who then and there had offer'd something more,
But he stood firm; and so the matter hung;
He knew the man; the colt would fetch its price
He gave them line: and how by chance at last
(It might be May or April, he forgot,
The last of April or the first of May)
He found the bailiff riding by the farm,
And, talking from the point, he drew him in,
And there he mellow'd all his heart with ale,
Until they closed a bargain, hand in hand.

"Then, while I breathed in sight of haven, he,
Poor fellow, could he help it? recommenced,
And ran thro' all the coltish chronicle,
Wild Will, Black Bess, Tantivy, Tallyho,
Reform, White Rose, Bellerophon, the Jilt,
Arbaces, and Phenomenon, and the rest,
Till, not to die a listener, I arose,
And with me Philip, talking still; and so
We turn'd our foreheads from the falling sun,
And following our own shadows thrice as long
As when they follow'd us from Philip's door,
Arrived, and found the sun of sweet content
Re-risen in Katie's eyes, and all things well.

I steal by lawns and grassy plots,
I slide by hazel covers;
I move the sweet forget-me-nots
That grow for happy lovers.

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,
Among my skimming swallows ;
I make the netted sunbeam dance
Against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars
In brambly wildernesses ;
I linger by my shingly bars ;
I loiter round my cresses ;

And out again I curve and flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on forever.

Yes, men may come and go; and these are gone,
All gone. My dearest brother, Edmund, sleeps,
Not by the well-known stream and rustic spire,
But unfamiliar Arno, and the dome
Of Brunelleschi ; sleeps in peace : and he,
Poor Philip, of all his lavish waste of words
Remains the lean P. W. on his tomb :
I scraped the lichen from it : Katie walks
By the long wash of Australasian seas
Far off, and holds her head to other stars,
And breathes in converse seasons. All are gone."
So Lawrence Aylmer, seated on a stile
In the long hedge, and rolling in his mind
Old waifs of rhyme, and bowing o'er the brook
A tonsured head in middle age forlorn,
Mused, and was mute. On a sudden a low breath
Of tender air made tremble in the hedge
The fragile bindweed-bells and briony rings;
And he look'd up. There stood a maiden near,
Waiting to pass. In much amaze he stared
On eyes a bashful azure, and on hair
In gloss and hue the chestnut, when the shell
Divides threefold to show the fruit within :
Then, wondering, ask'd her, "Are you from the farm ? "—
" Yes," answer'd she.—" Pray stay a little : pardon me ;

What do they call you?"—"Katie."—"That were strange.
What surname?"—"Willows."—"No!"—"That is my name."—
"Indeed!" and here he look'd so self-perplext,
That Katie laugh'd, and laughing blush'd, till he
Laugh'd also, but as one before he wakes,
Who feels a glimmering strangeness in his dream.
Then looking at her; "Too happy, fresh and fair,
Too fresh and fair in our sad world's best bloom,
To be the ghost of one who bore your name
About these meadows, twenty years ago."

"Have you not heard?" said Katie, "we came back.
We bought the farm we tenanted before.
Am I so like her? so they said on board.
Sir, if you knew her in her English days,
My mother, as it seems you did, the days
That most she loves to talk of, come with me.
My brother James is in the harvest-field:
But she—you will be welcome—O, come in!"

THE LETTERS.

1.

Still on the tower stood the vane,
A black yew gloom'd the stagnant air,
I peer'd athwart the chancel pane
And saw the altar cold and bare.
A clog of lead was round my feet,
A band of pain across my brow;
"Cold altar, Heaven and earth shall meet
Before you hear my marriage vow."

2.

I turn'd and humm'd a bitter song
That mock'd the wholesome human heart,
And then we met in wrath and wrong,
We met, but only meant to part.
Full cold my greeting was and dry;
She faintly smiled, she hardly moved;
I saw with half-unconscious eye
She wore the colors I approved.

3.

She took the little ivory chest,
With half a sigh she turn'd the key,
Then raised her head with lips comprest,
And gave my letters back to me.
And gave the trinkets and the rings,
My gifts, when gifts of mine could please;
As looks a father on the things
Of his dead son, I look'd on these.

4.

She told me all her friends had said;
I raged against the public liar;
She talk'd as if her love were dead,
But in my words were seeds of fire.

"No more of love; your sex is known:
I never will be twice deceived.
Henceforth I trust the man alone,
The woman cannot be believed.

5.

"Thro' slander, meanest spawn of Hell
(And women's slander is the worst),
And you, whom once I loved so well,
Thro' you, my life will be accurst."
I spoke with heart, and heat and force,
I shook her breast with vague alarms—
Like torrents from a mountain source
We rush'd into each other's arms.

6.

We parted: sweetly gleam'd the stars,
And sweet the vapor-braided blue,
Low breezes fann'd the belfry bars,
As homeward by the church I drew.
The very graves appear'd to smile,
So fresh they rose in shadow'd swells;
"Dark porch," I said, "and silent aisle,
There comes a sound of marriage bells."

ODE ON THE DEATH

OF

THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON.

1.

Bury the Great Duke
With an empire's lamentation,
Let us bury the Great Duke
To the noise of the mourning of a mighty nation,

Mourning when their leaders fall,
Warriors carry the warrior's pall,
And sorrow darkens hamlet and hall.

2.

Where shall we lay the man whom we deplore?
Here, in streaming London's central roar.
Let the sound of those he wrought for,
And the feet of those he fought for,
Echo round his bones for evermore.

3.

Lead out the pageant: sad and slow,
As fits an universal woe,
Let the long, long procession go,
And let the sorrowing crowd about it grow,
And let the mournful martial music blow;
The last great Englishman is low.

4.

Mourn, for to us he seems the last,
Remembering all his greatness in the Past.
No more in soldier fashion will he greet
With lifted hand the gazer in the street.
O friends, our chief state-oracle is mute:
Mourn for the man of long-enduring blood,
The statesman-warrior, moderate, resolute,
Whole in himself, a common good.
Mourn for the man of amplest influence,
Yet clearest of ambitious crime,
Our greatest yet with least pretence,
Great in council and great in war,
Foremost captain of his time,
Rich in saving common-sense,
And, as the greatest only are,
In his simplicity sublime.
O good gray head which all men knew,
O voice from which their omens all men drew,
O iron nerve to true occasion true,
O fall'n at length that tower of strength

Which stood foursquare to all the winds that blew!
Such was he whom we deplore.
The long self-sacrifice of life is o'er.
The great World-victor's victor will be seen no more.

5.

All is over and done:
Render thanks to the Giver,
England, for thy son.
Let the bell be toll'd.
Render thanks to the Giver,
And render him to the mould.
Under the cross of gold
That shines over city and river,
There he shall rest forever
Among the wise and the bold.
Let the bell be toll'd:
And a reverent people behold
The towering car, the sable steeds:
Bright let it be with his blazon'd deeds,
Dark in its funeral fold.
Let the bell be toll'd:
And a deeper knell in the heart be knoll'd;
And the sound of the sorrowing anthem roll'd
Thro' the dome of the golden cross;
And the volleying cannon thunder his loss;
He knew their voices of old.
For many a time in many a clime
His captain's-ear has heard them boom
Bellowing victory, bellowing doom;
When he with those deep voices wrought,
Guarding realms and kings from shame;
With those deep voices our dead captain taught
The tyrant, and asserts his claim
In that dread sound to the great name,
Which he has worn so pure of blame,
In praise and in dispraise the same,
A man of well-attemper'd frame.

O civic muse, to such a name,
To such a name for ages long,
To such a name,
Preserve a broad approach of fame,
And ever-ringing avenues of song.

6.

Who is he that cometh like an honor'd guest,
With banner and with music, with soldier and with priest,
With a nation weeping, and breaking on my rest?
Mighty seaman, this is he
Was great by land as thou by sea.
Thine island loves thee well, thou famous man,
The greatest sailor since our world began.
Now, to the roll of muffled drums,
To thee the greatest soldier comes;
For this is he
Was great by land as thou by sea;
His foes were thine; he kept us free;
O give him welcome, this is he,
Worthy of our gorgeous rites,
And worthy to be laid by thee;
For this is England's greatest son,
He that gain'd a hundred fights,
Nor ever lost an English gun;
This is he that far away
Against the myriads of Assaye
Clash'd with his fiery few and won;
And underneath another sun,
Warring on a later day,
Round affrighted Lisbon drew
The treble works, the vast designs
Of his labor'd rampart lines,
Where he greatly stood at bay,
Whence he issued forth anew,
And ever great and greater grew.
Beating from the wasted vines
Back to France her banded swarms,

Back to France with countless blows,
Till o'er the hills her eagles flew
Past the Pyrenean pines,
Follow'd up in valley and glen
With blare of bugle, clamor of men,
Roll of cannon and clash of arms,
And England pouring on her foes.
Such a war had such a close.
Again their ravening eagle rose
In anger, wheel'd on Europe-shadowing wings,
And barking for the thrones of kings;
Till one that sought but Duty's iron crown
On that loud sabbath shook the spoiler down;
A day of onsets of despair!
Dash'd on every rocky square
Their surging charges foam'd themselves away;
Last, the Prussian trumpet blew;
Through the long-tormented air
Heaven flash'd a sudden jubilant ray,
And down we swept and charged and overthrew
So great a soldier taught us there,
What long-enduring hearts could do
In that world's earthquake, Waterloo!
Mighty seaman, tender and true,
And pure as he from taint of craven guile,
O saviour of the silver-coasted isle,
O shaker of the Baltic and the Nile,
If aught of things that here befall
Touch a spirit among things divine,
If love of country move thee there at all,
Be glad, because his bones are laid by thine!
And thro' the centuries let a people's voice
In full acclaim,
A people's voice,
The proof and echo of all human fame,
A people's voice, when they rejoice
At civic revel and pomp and game,
Attest their great commander's claim
With honor, honor, honor, honor to him,
Eternal honor to his name.

7.

A people's voice! we are a people yet.
Tho' all men else their nobler dreams forget
Confused by brainless mobs and lawless Powers;
Thank Him who isled us here, and roughly set
His Saxon in blown seas and storming showers,
We have a voice with which to pay the debt
Of boundless love and reverence and regret
To those great men who fought, and kept it ours.
And keep it ours, O God, from brute control;
O Statesmen, guard us, guard the eye, the soul
Of Europe, keep our noble England whole,
And save the one true seed of freedom sown
Betwixt a people and their ancient throne,
That sober freedom out of which there springs
Our loyal passion for our temperate kings;
For, saving that, ye help to save mankind
Till public wrong be crumbled into dust,
And drill the raw world for the march of mind,
Till crowds at length be sane and crowns be just.
But wink no more in slothful overtrust.
Remember him who led your hosts;
He bade you guard the sacred coasts.
Your cannons moulder on the seaward wall;
His voice is silent in your council-hall
Forever; and whatever tempests lower
Forever silent; even if they broke
In thunder, silent; yet remember all
He spoke among you, and the Man who spoke;
Who never sold the truth, to serve the hour,
Nor palter'd with Eternal God for power;
Who let the turbid streams of rumor flow
Thro' either babbling world of high and low;
Whose life was work, whose language rife
With rugged maxims hewn from life;
Who never spoke against a foe;
Whose eighty winters freeze with one rebuke
All great self-seekers trampling on the right:

Truth-teller was our England's Alfred named;
Truth-lover was our English Duke;
Whatever record leap to light
He never shall be shamed.

8.

Lo, the leader in these glorious wars
Now to glorious burial slowly borne,
Follow'd by the brave of other lands,
He, on whom from both her open hands
Lavish Honor shower'd all her stars,
And affluent Fortune emptied all her horn.
Yea, let all good things await
Him who cares not to be great,
But as he saves or serves the state.
Not once or twice in our rough island-story,
The path of duty was the way to glory:
He that walks it, only thirsting
For the right, and learns to deaden
Love of self, before his journey closes,
He shall find the stubborn thistle bursting
Into glossy purples, which outredden
All voluptuous garden-roses.
Not once or twice in our fair island-story,
The path of duty was the way to glory:
He, that ever following her commands,
On with toil of heart and knees and hands,
Thro' the long gorge to the far light has won
His path upward, and prevail'd,
Shall find the toppling crags of Duty scaled
Are close upon the shining table-lands
To which our God Himself is moon and sun.
Such was he: his work is done:
But while the races of mankind endure,
Let his great example stand
Colossal, seen of every land,
And keep the soldier firm, the statesman pure:
Till in all lands and thro' all human story
The path of duty be the way to glory:

And let the land whose hearths he saved from shame
For many and many an age proclaim
At civic revel and pomp and game,
And when the long-illumined cities flame,
Their ever-loyal iron leader's fame,
With honor, honor, honor, honor to him,
Eternal honor to his name.

9.

Peace, his triumph will be sung
By some yet unmoulded tongue
Far on in summers that we shall not see:
Peace, it is a day of pain
For one about whose patriarchal knee
Late the little children clung:
O peace, it is a day of pain
For one, upon whose hand and heart and brain
Once the weight and fate of Europe hung.
Ours the pain, be his the gain!
More than is of man's degree
Must be with us, watching here
At this, our great solemnity.
Whom we see not we revere.
We revere, and we refrain
From talk of battles loud and vain,
And brawling memories all too free
For such a wise humility
As befits a solemn fane:
We revere, and while we hear
The tides of Music's golden sea
Setting toward eternity,
Uplifted high in heart and hope are we,
Until we doubt not that for one so true
There must be other nobler work to do
Than when he fought at Waterloo,
And Victor he must ever be.
For tho' the Giant Ages heave the hill
And break the shore, and evermore
Make and break, and work their will;

Tho' worlds on worlds in myriad myriads roll
Round us, each with different powers,
And other forms of life than ours,
What know we greater than the soul?
On God and Godlike men we build our trust.
Hush, the Dead March wails in the people's ears:
The dark crowd moves, and there are sobs and tears:
The black earth yawns: the mortal disappears;
Ashes to ashes, dust to dust;
He is gone who seem'd so great.—
Gone; but nothing can bereave him
Of the force he made his own
Being here, and we believe him
Something far advanced in State,
And that he wears a truer crown
Than any wreath that man can weave him.
But speak no more of his renown,
Lay your earthly fancies down,
And in the vast cathedral leave him.
God accept him, Christ receive him.

THE DAISY.

WRITTEN AT EDINBURGH.

O Love, what hours were thine and mine,
In lands of palm and southern pine;
In lands of palm, of orange-blossom,
Of olive, aloe, and maize and vine.

What Roman strength Turbia show'd
In ruin, by the mountain road;
How like a gem, beneath the city
Of little Monaco, basking, glow'd.

How richly down the rocky dell
The torrent vineyard streaming fell
To meet the sun and sunny waters,
That only heaved with a summer swell

What slender campanili grew
By bays, the peacock's neck in hue;
Where, here and there, on sandy beaches
A milky-bell'd amaryllis blew.

How young Columbus seem'd to rove,
Yet present in his natal grove,
Now watching high on mountain cornice,
And steering, now, from a purple cove,

Now pacing mute by ocean's rim;
Till, in a narrow street and dim,
I stay'd the wheels at Cogoletto,
And drank, and loyally drank to him.

Nor knew we well what pleased us most,
Not the clipt palm of which they boast;
But distant color, happy hamlet,
A moulder'd citadel on the coast,

Or tower, or high hill-convent, seen
A light amid its olives green;
Or olive-hoary cape in ocean;
Or rosy blossom in hot ravine,

Where oleanders flush'd the bed
Of silent torrents, gravel-spread;
And, crossing, oft we saw the glisten
Of ice, far off on a mountain head.

We loved that hall, tho' white and cold,
Those niched shapes of noble mould,
A princely people's awful princes,
The grave, severe Genovese of old.

At Florence too what golden hours,
In those long galleries, were ours;
What drives about the fresh Cascinè,
Or walks in Boboli's ducal bowers.

In bright vignettes, and each complete,
Of tower or duomo, sunny-sweet,
Or palace, how the city glitter'd,
Thro' cypress avenues, at our feet.

But when we crost the Lombard plain
Remember what a plague of rain;
Of rain at Reggio, rain at Parma;
At Lodi, rain, Piacenza, rain.

And stern and sad (so rare the smiles
Of sunlight) look'd the Lombard piles;
Porch-pillars on the lion resting,
And sombre, old, colonnaded aisles.

O Milan, O the chanting quires,
The giant windows' blazon'd fires,
The height, the space, the gloom, the glory!
A mount of marble, a hundred spires!

I climb'd the roofs at break of day;
Sun-smitten Alps before me lay.
I stood among the silent statues,
And statued pinnacles, mute as they.

How faintly-flush'd, how phantom-fair,
Was Monte Rosa, hanging there
A thousand shadowy-pencill'd valleys
And snowy dells in a golden air.

Remember how we came at last
To Como; shower and storm and blast
Had blown the lake beyond his limit,
And all was flooded; and how we past

From Como, when the light was gray,
And in my head, for half the day,
The rich Virgilian rustic measure
Of Lari Maxume, all the way,

Like ballad-burthen music, kept,
As on The Lariano crept
To that fair port below the castle
Of Queen Theodolind, where we slept;

Or hardly slept, but watch'd awake
A cypress in the moonlight shake,
The moonlight touching o'er a terrace
One tall Agavè above the lake.

What more? we took our last adieu,
And up the snowy Splugen drew,
But ere we reach'd the highest summit
I pluck'd a daisy, I gave it you.

It told of England then to me,
And now it tells of Italy.
O love, we two shall go no longer
To lands of summer across the sea:

So dear a life your arms enfold
Whose crying is a cry for gold:
Yet here to-night in this dark city,
When ill and weary, alone and cold,

I found, tho' crush'd to hard and dry,
This nursling of another sky
Still in the little book you lent me,
And where you tenderly laid it by:

And I forgot the clouded Forth,
The gloom that saddens Heaven and Earth,
The bitter east, the misty summer
And gray metropolis of the North.

Perchance, to lull the throbs of pain,
Perchance, to charm a vacant brain,
  Perchance, to dream you still beside me,
My fancy fled to the South again.

TO THE REV. F. D. MAURICE.

Come, when no graver cares employ,
Godfather, come and see your boy:
  Your presence will be sun in winter,
Making the little one leap for joy.

For, being of that honest few,
Who give the Fiend himself his due,
  Should eighty thousand college-councils
Thunder "Anathema," friend, at you;

Should all our churchmen foam in spite
At you, so careful of the right,
  Yet one lay-hearth would give you welcome
(Take it and come) to the Isle of Wight;

Where, far from noise and smoke of town,
I watch the twilight falling brown
  All round a careless-order'd garden
Close to the ridge of a noble down.

You'll have no scandal while you dine,
But honest talk and wholesome wine,
  And only hear the magpie gossip
Garrulous under a roof of pine:

For groves of pine on either hand,
To break the blast of winter, stand;
  And further on, the hoary Channel
Tumbles a breaker on chalk and sand;

Where, if below the milky steep
Some ship of battle slowly creep,
And on thro' zones of light and shadow
Glimmer away to the lonely deep,

We might discuss the Northern sin
Which made a selfish war begin;
Dispute the claims, arrange the chances;
Emperor, Ottoman, which shall win:

Or whether war's avenging rod
Shall lash all Europe into blood;
Till you should turn to dearer matters,
Dear to the man that is dear to God;

How best to help the slender store,
How mend the dwellings, of the poor;
How gain in life, as life advances,
Valor and charity more and more.

Come, Maurice, come: the lawn as yet
Is hoar with rime, or spongy-wet;
But when the wreath of March has blossom'd,
Crocus, anemone, violet,

Or later, pay one visit here,
For those are few we hold as dear;
Nor pay but one, but come for many,
Many and many a happy year.

January, 1854.

WILL.

1.

O WELL for him whose will is strong!
He suffers, but he will not suffer long;

He suffers, but he cannot suffer wrong:
For him nor moves the loud world's random mock,
Nor all Calamity's hugest waves confound,
Who seems a promontory of rock,
That, compass'd round with turbulent sound,
In middle ocean meets the surging shock,
Tempest-buffeted, citadel-crown'd.

2.

But ill for him who, bettering not with time,
Corrupts the strength of heaven-descended Will,
And ever weaker grows thro' acted crime,
Or seeming-genial venial fault,
Recurring and suggesting still!
He seems as one whose footsteps halt,
Toiling in immeasurable sand,
And o'er a weary sultry land,
Far beneath a blazing vault,
Sown in a wrinkle of the monstrous hill,
The city sparkles like a grain of salt.

THE

CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE.

1.

Half a league, half a league,
Half a league onward,
All in the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.
"Forward, the Light Brigade!
"Charge for the guns!" he said:
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

2.

"Forward, the Light Brigade!"
Was there a man dismay'd?
Not tho' the soldier knew
Some one had blunder'd:
Theirs not to make reply,
Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs but to do and die,
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

3.

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon in front of them
Volley'd and thunder'd;
Storm'd at with shot and shell,
Boldly they rode and well,
Into the jaws of Death,
Into the mouth of Hell
Rode the six hundred.

4.

Flash'd all their sabres bare,
Flash'd as they turn'd in air,
Sabring the gunners there,
Charging an army, while
All the world wonder'd:
Plunged in the battery-smoke
Right thro' the line they broke;
Cossack and Russian
Reel'd from the sabre-stroke
Shatter'd and sunder'd.
Then they rode back, but not
Not the six hundred.

5.

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon behind them
  Volley'd and thunder'd;
Storm'd at with shot and shell,
While horse and hero fell,
They that had fought so well
Came thro' the jaws of Death
Back from the mouth of Hell,
All that was left of them,
  Left of six hundred.

6.

When can their glory fade?
O the wild charge they made!
  All the world wonder'd.
Honor the charge they made!
Honor the Light Brigade,
  Noble six hundred!

THE END.

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